THE PARISH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

CAHOKIA, ILLINOIS

1699 - 1949

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by

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To
Mary Immaculate,
Mother of God,
in Whose Honor
the
Mississippi
River
and
its Valley
was
Discovered
and
Originally Named.

Nihil Obstat:
LEONARD A. BAUER, S.T.D.
Censor Deputatus

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✠ ALBERT R. ZUROWESTE, D.D.
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FOREWORD

This is the story of the Catholic Church at the crossroads of America, for the history of the Parish of the Holy Family in Cahokia Illinois is, in microcosm, the history of the Church in our country, from rough Indian mission to modern, shiny buildings. The Parish was born when Louis XIV, the Sun King, dominated Europe and half the world from his splendid new palace at Versailles. The little Parish, at the cross roads of history and geography, has witnessed and been affected by all of Europe's great wars, most of its philosophical and social trends and every ecclesiastical change for two hundred and fifty years. It has been by turns French, English and American. And like the Church Universal, the Parish has weathered the changes, quietly standing by the road, steadily teaching the truths of eternity, fulfilling its destiny. Neither today, nor at any time in its previous twenty-five decades was it much more than a token of Catholicity, a tiny island of Truth in an endless expanse of confusion, uncertainty and distrust. But it was an important token to the various nations which have governed its small plot of ground as well as to the Church whose doctrines it has taught. In the shadow of its church aborigines became Christians, Frenchmen became Americans, and Americans became Catholics. It has witnessed Indians massacre Europeans, patriots win a Revolution, and Americans march off to every war our country has fought. Every problem which has faced America and the Church in America has been discussed before its church door. Every modification of life in America is reflected in its history. The Parish has a really great story to tell.

MISSION TO THE TAMAROA 1699-1763

The history of the Parish of the Holy Family at Cahokia began three hundred years ago in the College of Louis-le-Grand in Paris when Francois de Montmorency Laval, first Bishop of Quebec, was a student of theology. There he joined a small group of young students who, under the direction of the Jesuit Father Jean Bagot, (1) banded together to advance their own spiritual lives and to work for the spread of the Faith. Two of Laval's associates, Francois Pallu and Peter de la-Lambert, as vicars-Apostolic to China founded the "Gentlemen of the Foreign Missions of Paris", a society of diocesan priests living in a community whose purpose is to evangelize those who sit in darkness by establishing churches and training a native clergy. (2) Diverted from his intention to be with his companions, one of the vanguard for the missions of Asia, Francois de Laval, five years after he was consecrated Bishop of Petraea **in partibus infidelium** and vicar-apostolic of New France, established, in 1663, the Seminary of Quebec, modeled on the Society of the Foreign missions of Paris. (3) Thirty-five years later, on May 1, 1698, Laval's successor Jean-Baptiste de la Croix-Chevière de St. Vallier, issued Letters Papent to the "Superior and Directors of the Seminary of the Foreign Missions of Quebec" authorizing them to establish their first great missionary project among the aborigines of the Mississippi Valley. The Village of the Tamora tribe of the Illinois Nation, tucked behind an island half way between the mouth and the source of the great Father of Waters was chosen as the most advantageous location for a central headquarters because it was the "key and necessary passage to the nations beyond". (4) Today we call the old Indian village of Tamaroa, **Cahokia.** The name of Cahokia's parish church is the Church of the Holy Family.

For twenty-five years, since the Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette had reported the character of the native races which he met in 1673 on his intrepid voyage of discovery of the Mississippi River, those tribes had been a sort of spiritual El Dorado for the clergy of France both Old and New. Particularly was this true of the various divisions of the Illinois Nation whom Father Marquette so warmly admired. The Illinois were of Algonquin stock which probably drifted into the Middle West because of a long series of wars. The nation was composed of the Cahokia-Tamaroa, the Kaskaskia, the Michigamea and the Peoria Indians all of whom, when first contacted by Europeans, were dwelling on one or other eastern tributary of the Mississippi, roughly between the present site of Chicago and the mouth of the Ohio River. (5) The earliest missionaries among them portrayed these people as the true, unique "noble savages", lithe and gentle, tractable and skillful, chaste and honest. As early as 1673 they were already trading furs to their eastern neighbors for guns and European goods. Their staple diet was Indian corn which they supplanted, when occasion offered, by the fruits of the chase, beans, melons and squash. (6) On closer acquaintance the Illinois were found to be very much blood brothers with the rest of North America's natives. They were timid, fearful of their eastern enemies, given to capricious migration, wanting in stability of purpose, pretty much grown children with adult appetites and pre-adolescent will-power. (7) But they were children of God for whose souls the French missionaries pledged their lives.

The introductory missionary work, which eventually led to the establishment of the Parish of Cahokia was begun when Father Marquette in 1673 promised the Chiefs of the "Great Village of the Illinois" that he would return and dwell among them. (8) Ill health detained him at Green Bay until 1674, whence he could set out to fulfill his promise. When he reached Chicago, in December, he was too unwell to go on. In the spring of 1675 Marquette reached the Great Village and established the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, erected a great mission cross and began the difficult task of instructing the Illinois in the Faith. His stay was not long, for after celebrating Easter he started back to Green Bay which he never reached; he died on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. (9) But Marquette had inflamed the hearts of his brethren with the will to continue the work among the tribes of the Illinois. In 1677 Father Claude Allouez, fit successor to Marquette, a missionary of the stature of the martyr Brebeuf, took up quarters in Father Marquette's little hut in the Village of the Kaskaskias, as he called it, to survey the field and prepare for permanent settlement. During March and April of that year Allouez dwelt with his savages, learning their language and making friends in preparation for what he certainly must have thought was to be a great, permanent center of fruitful apostolic work in the middle of America. When he took his departure on May 3, 1677 one may well imagine the enthusiasm with which he looked forward to returning for the stay of two years which he promised his aboriginal friends. (10) But it was to be thirteen years before the Illinois were to have resident missionaries among them and twenty-two years before the establishment of a mission at Cahokia. Diplomacy and intrigue both in Quebec and Versailles were to interfere.

While Father Allouez and his fellow Jesuits were probably dreaming of establishing Jesuit Reductions in the midst of North America where the baleful influence of Europeans would be excluded until the simple savage had been civilized, Christianized and prepared to meet the white man on an equal footing, the Governor of New France, Count Frontenac, was preparing quite a different future for this newly discovered land. The economic lifeblood of New France was her fur-trade. This single commodity export fed, clothed and entertained the French of Canada, made fortunes for her governmental officials, gave the home government reasonable hope for a profit on the investment made to keep New France afloat and offered the sole reason for the colony's financial life. Every official policy, every appointment, must subserve the advancement of the fur-trade. In the seventh decade of the seventeenth century France and England were joined in combat over control of the western fur-trade. England was fairly certain of the Iroquois, who could possibly dominate the economic life of the western tribes either by alliances or by threats of war. The

French, however, had no strong Indian allies. Yet the French must survive to capture the prize, domination of the trade with the western tribes, or their colony of New France must wither and die. In the purely economic struggle the soul of the Indian and his eternal salvation counted all too little. Exploitation of the Illinois country's economic possibilities was more essential. Hence the French Crown in 1678 granted a monopoly to Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, who extended his activities into the Illinois country, retarding the work of the missionaries for a dozen years. (11)

Those dozen years have a story to be briefly recounted which helps one to understand the history of the Parish of Cahokia. La Salle and his traders, accompanied by the Recollet missionaries Fathers Hennepin, Membre and Ribourde, (12) reached the Illinois tribes in January 1680, where they promptly erected a fort, opened shipyards and set about making friends with their Indian neighbors. Within a year raiding Iroquois and unfaithful Frenchmen destroyed the project. By 1862, La Salle had rebuilt his fort and was ready to extend operations southward along the Mississippi. Henri Tonty, La Salle's faithful lieutenant, was left behind to continue trading. During these years 1680 to 1687 the Recollets, and for a short time Father Jean Cavelier, La Salle's brother, did some irregular missionary work among the Illinois tribes, which, though sporadic, probably kept alive in the minds of the savages some little spark of the fire of Faith kindled by Marquette. However, once the country of the Illinois had been opened to trade the influx of Europeans continued unceasingly, increasing tenfold the difficulties of converting the savages.

In 1690, when the La Salle enterprise had been defunct for three years, the Jesuits petitioned the Bishop of Quebec for authority to assume responsibility for the conversion of the Illinois country. Having received episcopal permission on December 15, 1690, to evangelize the "Illinois and the surrounding [tribes] as also those of the Miami, the Sioux, and other [tribes] of the Ottawa country and towards the setting [sun] . . ." (13) together with the powers of vicar-general for one of the missionaries in the country, Father Jacques Gravier was dispatched by his superiors to begin again the work inaugurated by Father Marquette. He found that great changes in the location of the various tribes had been effected by the wars of the Iroquois and the influx of the Europeans. The "Great Village of the Kaskaskias" was reduced in population and moved further southwest in location (14). Some of the tribes had established themselves along the banks of the Mississippi. Among these was the Tamaroa who had settled on a stretch of prairie opposite a large island of the Mississippi. Using the Mission of the Guardian Angels at the present site of Chicago as headquarters, the Jesuits began travelling about in the Illinois country, following the various tribes on the hunt and dwelling with them during the winter, teaching them the truths of Christianity. During the eight succeeding years the Indians of the Illinois had as their missionaries Fathers Gravier, Sebastian Rale of Abnaki fame, Pierre Gabriel Marest, Julien Bineteau and Pierre Francois Pinet. While they never established a mission among the Tamaroa, at the present

Cahokia, the Jesuits visited the tribe, whose members were part of their charge, and at least acquainted those peoples with the basic truths of Chistianity (15). Yet it may not be said that Father Gravier and his companions founded the Parish of Cahokia. This honor belongs to others.

Early in 1698 the Superior and Directors of the Seminary of Quebec approached the ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese requesting permission to dispatch a group of their missionaries to the Mississippi Valley to inaugurate their first great mission endeavour. Thirty-five years before, it may be recalled, Bishop Laval had founded the Seminary with this very purpose in mind. Now, finally, the great moment was at hand. Sufficient priests had been educated to supply the more pressing needs at home. With a few extra priests and funds, in great part contributed by the candidates themselves, the authorities at the Seminary could naturally be expected to be anxious to bring to fruitation the primary purpose for their existance. Ready at hand was a vast, new field, ripe for the harvest. Both the Jesuits and the Recollets had written glowingly about the hundreds of miles of wonderful country through which the great Mississippi flowed. The native races had been described as rather highly civilized, attractive, eager to receive the gospel of Christ and, above all, the various tribes were said to be quite large in population. Here was an overwhelmingly vast mission field, only a very small part of which was under the actual care of the Jesuits. West of the Illinois were the tribes of the Missouri River country who had never been contacted. Below the Ohio River were literally hundreds of tribes whom the Seminary priests imagined were pleadingly emitting the Macedonian cry: "Come over and help us". We can be sure that there was great rejoicing in the Seminary on May 1, 1698 when it was announced that Bishop St. Vallier had granted Letters Patent to the Superior and Directors to establish missions anywhere in the Mississippi Valley where there might be hope of converting the natives (16). Further, the superior of the group of missionaries was to have the powers of a vicar general of the diocese. Here indeeed was the realization of gentle, old Bishop Laval's dream.

But the unalloyed happiness of the Seminary priests was not to be too long-lived. Two difficulties immediately appeared. Bishop St. Vallier, it may be remembered, had already issued to the Jesuits ecclesiastical authority to do mission work among the tribes of the Sioux, the Ottawa and the Illinois. Clearly the Bishop's new concession gave more extensive territories to the priests of the Seminary; and, what is always poor administration, the two grants overlapped in extension. A second problem lay in the fact that on investigation it became evident that the most strategic place for general headquarters in the Mississippi Valley for the effort of the Seminary of Quebec would be in the little village of the Tamaroa. This would be the most convenient spot for a central location both for the projected missions up the Missouri River and down the Mississippi. But was the Tamaroa tribe not already being evangelized by the Jesuits? If so, could they be induced to surrender the location? The settlement of the matter required some days of discussion. Henry Tonty, who knew the Illinois country so well, was asked whether the Jesuits had a mission at Tamaroa. The Superior of the Jesuits in Canada, Father Bryas was absent, but Father Germain, one of his subjects, declared that as far as was known, the Jesuits had no mission at Tamaroa (17). Hastily, therefore, a second document was issued on July 14, by Bishop St. Vallier in which he declared: (18)

> ". . . . considering that the above named Tamaroa is as it were the key and necessary passage to the nations beyond; hence to facilitate the effort of the said Seminary of the Foreign Missions it is important that they be able to establish a residence and found a mission among the Tamaroa. We, desiring to eliminate any obstacle to the highly praiseworthy enterprise which the said Superior and Directors of the aforementioned Seminary have of spreading the Faith to the abovementioned countries, have permitted and do permit by these presents to send their missionaries among the said savages, called Tamaroa, and to found there such establishments, residences and missions as they shall judge suitable."

With all jurisdictional problems settled, apparently to the satisfaction of the interested parties, the members of the community of the Seminary of Quebec designated for their great venture pushed their canoes into the St. Lawrence on July 16, 1689, bound for their great mission field. This was a well organized and adequately financed undertaking. M. Francois Jolliet de Montigny was the superior and vicar-general. His companions were M. Jean Francois Buisson de St. Cosme, earliest chronicler of the expedition, and M. Antoine Davion. They were accompanied by Thaumur de la Source, in Deacon's Orders, who went along to learn the Illinois dialect and await the proper canonical age for his ordination. It had cost about $2,000 to launch the party, of which sum its leaders had contributed the greater amount. The three priests and the Deacon were accompanied by three **Freres Donnes,** lay assistant, two blacksmiths and some dozen workmen, all of whom intended to work for the missions. Tonty was induced to accompany the party to help with their first Indian contacts. Jean-Baptiste Bissot de Vincennes, a trader with four canoes under his command, joined the small flotilla, accompanying it as far as the present Racine, Wisconsin (19).

The first six months of their voyages the new missionaries spent in surveying their field of operations. They stopped at Mackinac, Green Bay, and at the mission of the Jesuits at Chicago and Peoria. Continuing on to the Mississippi River they reached the Tamaroa tribe on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Camping on the right bank of the river they waited till the morning to meet their future neophytes, thus giving Tonty opportunity to prepare the way for their entrance among the natives. On the morning of December 8, 1698, The "Gentlemen of the Seminary of Quebec" came across the river to Tamaroa and entered the village where they were soon to establish the Parish of the Holy Family of Cahokia (20).

Since the Tamaroa were to be the first parishoners of Holy Family Parish, we might briefly record the impression made by them on their new pastors. It is to be remembered that La Salle was none too kindly treated by the Tamaroa. Also, Tonty's traders had encountered trouble with them. Thus when the missionaries arrived with Tonty the Indians were naturally quite fearful as to possible consequences from this, to them, rather formidable array of Europeans. St. Cosme reports: (21)

> "These savages received timely warning of our coming from some of the Kaoukias (Cahokias) who carried the news to them, and as a year before they had molested Monsier de Tonty's men, they were afraid and all their children and women fled from the village. The chief came with some of his people to receive us on the water's edge and to invite us to their village, but we did not because, we wished to prepare for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. . . . . .
>
> On the following day They came to meet us and led us to the chief's cabin. All the women and children were there. and no sooner had we entered the cabin than the young men and the women broke away parts of it to see us. They had never seen blackgowns, except for a few days Reverend Father Gravier, who had made a journey to their country. They gave us food and we gave them a small present, as we had done to the Kaouchias . . . . . . They received the gifts with many thanks and after that we returned to our camp.

Our chronicler goes on to declare that he considered both the tribe and their geographical situation admirably suited for a "rather fine mission" if the Cahokias who dwelt nearby could be induced to unite with their neighbors. M. St. Cosme tells us that the Tamaroa are quite numerous, though at the moment the greater number of the tribe is away on a hunt. It is thought by the missionary that the Machigamia, who have a village a little lower down the river, might be brought to join forces with the Cahokia and the Tamaroa. With the three villages united the mission effort would be very fruitful. We are told that all three tribes speak the Illinois dialect. The Seminary priests must indeed have been favorably impressed both with the place and the people for after a preliminary examination of the country as far south as the Arkansas, the party returned to Tamaroa in March of 1699. It was decided that M. St. Cosme should take up residence while the others went up country to collect the baggage which had been stored with the Jesuits at their Mission of the Guardian Angels. From the moment St. Cosme stepped ashore in March of 1699 until today the Parish of Cahokia has existed.

The first pastor of Holy Family Parish, M. St. Cosme, promptly set about the business of making the projected mission a reality. With only two French workmen to assist him he built a log rectory and a chapel. During the short period of two months he had cleared the forest, erected two buildings and baptized some thirty people. Accompanied by the Jesuit Father, Julian Bineteau, M. de

Montigny returned from his journey to Chicago to find the mission an actuality, even to a small handful of newly baptized Christians. The superior wrote: (22)

> "The chapel being finished, we planted a cross with the greatest possible ceremony. All the Indians were in attendance; they showed a great desire to become instructed and to become Christians and brought their little children that we might baptize them and give them a name."

The date of the ceremony, which is considered the founding day of the Parish is disputed. We may assume the earliest date, May 14, 1699, to be accurate. The Parish was dedicated to the Holy Family probably because that devotion was popular in Canada just then. And such has been its title for two hundred and fifty years, except for a brief space early in the nineteenth century when the church was named in honor of the Good Shepherd. Perhaps the title may have been suggested by the retired Bishop Laval. We have one small bit of evidence in favor of this. When his native city of Montigny-sur-Avre wished to commemorate the tercentinary of the birth of Canada's first bishop, there was erected in his honor a monument depicting Old France offering her son Francois de Laval to New France in the presence of the Holy Family (23).

Scarcely was the mission cross firmly planted before the log chapel at Tamaroa when a jurisdictional dispute arose which affected both the missionaries in the field and the ecclesiastical and civil officials in Canada and France. In most concise form, the basis of the argument may be reduced to a two-fold misunderstanding: on the part of the Jesuits in Quebec as to the nature of the work carried on by their members in the Illinois country; on the part of the Bishop of Canada, the granting of the same field of operation to two distinct groups. It may be parenthetically remarked that this seeming contentious period has a serious basis. There was question as to the liciety of the administration of the Sacraments; hence the contending parties are not capricious in earnestly desiring a solution. The Jesuits actually in the field, with a great deal of justice in their contention, felt that their right to the evangelization of the Illinois country, resting on Letters Patent issued to them in 1690, clearly was invaded. After all they had spent a quarter of a century off and on sending men into the country, learning the language, visiting the tribes, and expending their meagre resources on the effort. While it was true that they never actually dwelt for any length of time among the Tamaroa, neither had they built a mission chapel in the transitory village of other Illinois tribes. While they welcomed the members of the Seminary of Quebec as fellow missionaries, it seemed to the Jesuits that these zealous priests might well be assigned to a new field. And certainly, in simple equity, the Jesuits had much on their side (24).

The Superior and Directors of the Seminary of Quebec had, in good faith, come to Bishop St. Vallier in 1698 and asked to be assigned the mission field of the Mississippi Valley, intending, it appears, to concentrate their efforts in the Missouri country and the area below the mouth of the Ohio. Unquestionably, a venture of the propositions planned by the priests of the Seminary required a centrally located headquarters which would be situated among friendly people. Old hands in the Indian trade, such as Tonty, suggested the Tamaroa Village as the most likely situation for the center. Since the tribe, and hence the Village, was clearly under the jurisdiction of the Jesuits, the Bishop was requested to amend his original grant to include this little band of aborigines and their home within the area to be evangelized by the priests of the Seminary (25).

The part taken by the Bishop in the whole matter is somewhat less single-minded, but not necessarily devious. The great Laval's successor was not of the same stature as his predecessor. St. Vallier expected to administer his diocese in the New World with the same neat dispatch with which such work could be done in France, a practical impossibility in a virgin country, sparsely populated and constantly in danger. After nine years of tempestuous rule, the Bishop was recalled to France where he was chided for his mistakes and instructed to rule with less law and more diplomacy. On his return in 1697 he was sincerely anxious to make amends to the priests of the Seminary whom he had treated somewhat harshly in the past. The Bishop was a personally good man, but inclined to be somewhat impetuous, a little drastic and perhaps disinclined to reverse decision should they be found to be a bit unwise (26).

It is pleasant to note that whatever may have been the difficulties between them, both the Jesuits in their missions and the priests of the Seminary, did not allow personal emnities to arise. M. Davion wrote to the Bishop of Quebec: (27) "I can truly say that it would be desirable that everywhere such perfect harmony be kept between the Jesuits and us as is kept here . . . . we are cooperating as if we were all members of one community." Father Gabriel Marest, the Jesuit missionary related to one of his brethren: (28)

> "Three Gentlemen of the Quebec Seminary, sent by Monseigneur the Bishop to establish missions on the Mississippi passed through here. We received them as well as we could possess amid a scarcity as great as that which prevailed throughout the village during the year. On leaving we induced them to take seven sacks of corn that we had left, concealing our poverty from them so that they might have less objection to receiving what we offered them."

To return to the chronological history of the Parish of Cahokia, after the departure of Father Bineteau on the usual winter hunting expidition with the Indians and the leave-taking with M. de Montigny, who was bound for his mission station among the Taensas Indians, M. St. Cosme was pleasantly surprised by the arrival of a recruit. M. de Bouteville who had been dispatched to answer an appeal from the Superior, M. de Montigny for help (29). Even with his brother-priest for companion, the following months must have been trying ones. The country was strange, the people none too friendly, and what was most difficult neither of the priests spoke the Indian dialect. We can reasonably assume that they filled their days, after the tribe reassembled from their summer's hunting expedition, in attempting to make themselves proficient in the language of their aboriginal parishioners and in striving, probably chiefly by example, to teach the natives the doctrines of Christ.

On the first day of February, 1700 the two missionaries were rejoiced by the arrival of M. Marc Bergier, newly appointed Superior of the mission and vicar-general for the area (30). A few days more than a month later two Jesuits, Father Francois Pinet and Father Joseph de Limoges, appeared announcing that they had been ordered by their Superior, Father Jacques Gravier, a St. Paul among the Jesuit missionaries, to take up the evangilization of the Tamaroa and the tribes of the Missouri country (31). Here, indeed was a difficult situation. The priests of the Seminary with only the sketchiest ability to converse with the Indians could do hardly any mission work while Father Pinet, a fluent linguist of the Illinois dialect was present. There were only a handful of French, mostly transients, who might need spiritual aid. Thus, actually in the field the question of jurisdiction became a momentuous problem.

By mid-summer the situation was further complicated by restlessness among the Illinois tribes induced by threats of Sioux invasions (32). The Kaskaskia, hearing that the French had established a fort at the mouth of the Mississippi, decided to migrate thither for safety. By mid-September these natives had reached the banks of the Mississippi and, crossing it, had set up a village opposite the Tamaroa at the mouth of the little river which has come to be called Des Peres (32). With them were the two Jesuit missionaries Fathers Gravier and Gabriel Marest. The effect on the Indians in the Tamaroa Village is readily imagined. Theatened by the Sioux, the natural inclination was to cross the river and join forces with the Kaskaskia. An equally pressing argument for the step was the fact that the French traders who were acquainted with the strong Kaskaskia tribe would certainly make the new settlement the local center of trade. The few French who had settled at the Tamaroa Village transferred to the Kaskaskia Village which soon had a fort for protection. In the spring of 1701 Rouensa, chief of the Kaskaskia and a staunch Catholic, visited the Tamaroa to induce them to join the Kaskaskia. Some of the natives on the Illinois side of the river were persuaded, but the chief of the Tamaroa, Chickagoua, was so indifferent in the matter that many decided to remain (33).

Though the lassitude of a single chief had thus saved the Mission of the Holy Family from extinction, M. Bergier, a man of strong character and positive in his opinions, was well aware that the mission effort of the priests of the Seminary of Quebec must be put on a more certain footing than it appeared to be. If the Jesuits, who knew the Indians and their language, were to continue to maintain a missionary at Tamaroa and another across the river in a fortified town, quite evidently the priests of the Seminary could have no hope of doing mission work in the Tamaroa-Cahokia area. M. Bergier decided to take steps to remedy matters. His first move was to request that Father Pinet withdraw from Tamaroa. The Jesuit, under orders from his own superior to remain at his post, declined to leave his neophytes. Probably because the Superior of the priests of the Seminary felt it necessary to present a token of the authority which his position as vicar-general carried, M. Bergier placed an interdict on Father Pinet's little Indian chapel whereby the Jesuit was prohibited from holding religious services for his natives (34). But precisely here was the crux of the problem. Since Father Gravier, the superior of the Jesuits attached to the Illinois mission, exercised the same ecclesiastical powers as did M. Bergier, Father Pinet, while expressing himself willing to comply with proper authority, questioned whether M. Bergier could interdict his chapel. Having made the proper gestures, each zealous priest continued the work at hand, dwelling in the same village, meeting daily to discuss the problem of converting the natives and preventing the French from entirely debauching them.

Certainly such a situation could not continue indefinitely. Back home, in France and Canada, the whole matter was under discussion. Between 1700 and 1702 the court in France, a committee of Bishops and the General of the Jesuits as well as the Bishop of Quebec, and representatives of the Seminary of Quebec examined the rival claims of ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the little Indian village of Tamaroa. In May of 1702 Thrysus Gonzales, General of the Jesuits, directed his subjects to surrender all claim to the territory in favor of the Seminary of Quebec. The little mission thus became the exclusive care of M. Bergier and his successors from the Seminary of Quebec.

From June of 1702, when the decision concerning the Tamaroa Village was announced, until his death in 1707 the history of the Parish of Cahokia is almost exclusively the biography of the last five years of M. Bergier's life, probably happy years for they were spent in active mission work among the Indians. In the Fall of 1702 M. Bergier accompanied the natives on their hunting expedition, spending most of the winter with them. When Easter was celebrated in 1703 he could report that he had baptized eleven of his neophytes (35). Apparently M. Bergier spent a great deal of the next few years visiting neighboring tribes for we know that he asked the Jesuits at Kaskaskia (36) to look after his mission in his absence. We have one pleasant episode to record concerning these years. Michael Ako, a half-breed who had been with Father Hennepin on the expedition to Minnesota twenty years before, sought the hand of Aramepinchicue, daughter of the esteemed Rouensa, chief of the Kaskaskia. Though not a dreamy romance, since the lady in question agreed to the marriage only after a parental command, the couple married and their child, a son, was sent to the Seminary in Quebec to be educated. M. Bergier must have had great hopes for this lad, whom we may correctly suppose was looked upon as the future first native priest of the Mississippi tribes (37). The pastor's dreams were not realized for the child's subsequent history is unknown.

The last days of Cahokia's second pastor, and the first to be buried there, seem to merit detailed recording. Early in January, 1707 Father Gabriel Marest, the Jesuit missionary to Kaskaskia was informed of M. Bergier's serious illness. Hastening to Tamaroa, Father Marest found its pastor very ill, but after a week of nursing him the Jesuit felt that he could leave his patient who seemed on the road to recovery. Returning to Kaskaskia, Father Marest spent some weeks travelling about visiting scattered bands of the Kaskaskia. Having cared for his people, the missionary returned to his headquarters where he found no news of the priest in the Tamaroa Village. Marest's inclination was to go there at once, but his people dissuaded him, arguing that if M. Bergier had not recovered, someone would certainly have come to seek help. Finally a messenger did arrive, bearing the sad news that M. Bergier had died. Father Marest set out at once to care for the obsequies. On his return he wrote to Quebec: (38)

> "The death of Monsieur Bergier was somewhat sudden, according to what was told me by the Frenchman who was with him; he felt it coming all at once, and said that it would be useless to send for me, since he would be dead before my arrival. He merely took in his hand the crucifix, which he kissed lovingly and expired. He was a missionary of true merit and of a very austere life."

Perhaps nowhere else do we learn so much of the difficulties of the early days of the Parish of Cahokia as we do from the following short paragraph written by Father Marest as a sort of monument to M. Bergier: (39)

> At the beginning of his mission he had to bear rude attacks from the Cahrlatans, who, availing themselves of his slight knowledge of the language, every day took away from him some Christians; but eventually he learned how to make himself in his turn, feared by these imposters. His death was a cause of triumph for them. They gathered around the cross that he had erected, and there they invoked their Manitou—each one dancing and attributing to himself the glory of having killed the Missionary, after which they broke the cross into a thousand pieces. I learned that with great grief afterwards.

Knowing the Indian character well, Father Marest realized that such an insult to the Cross, and hence to the Religion of the French, must be atoned lest the natives think they might with impunity defy the ministers of God and of the King. He, therefore, persuaded the French using Tamaroa as a trading post to withdraw until the chiefs of the place had made amends. Very quickly the Tamaroa were brought to do so. Hastening to Kaskaskia they were profound in their apologies, promising to erect a new cross and to make it known to their people that the action had been wrong. (40)

The year 1707 was a discouraging one for the priests of the Seminary of Quebec. M. Bergier, their able superior in the field, had died and St. Cosme had been killed by Indians in the lower Mississippi Valley. The whole mission effort was a great drain on the resources of the Seminary. Subsidies from the Crown, customary for such ventures, had not been forthcoming. Besides, the number of recruits was not sufficient to supply the missions already established. No one could be sent to supplant M. Bergier at Tamaroa. Nor were the Seminarists able to place another of their missionaries in charge of the Parish of Cahokia until 1712, for the coming five years, the history of the Parish is only sketchily recorded by the infrequent visits of the Jesuit missionaries from Kaskaskia who apparently tried to visit the place every few months. This service had been promised to M. Bergier by Father Marest, who kept his word.

A more hopeful future for the Parish of Cahokia opened in 1712 when the Director of the Seminary of Quebec appointed M. Dominique Marie Varlet to the post of Superior of the missions, whose center was the Tamaroa Village. The new Superior was a Doctor of the Sorbonne, brilliant, young and zestful. Because the obligations of his office obliged M. Varlet to travel about contacting the rest of his brethern in the Mississippi Valley, examining their work, Cahokia apparently saw little of him during the five years he was officially its pastor. Though we have only scanty indications of the religious life of the parish during M. Varlet's incumbency, we know a great deal about the history of Cahokia during the period.

The coming years were hectic times for the French in the Mississippi Valley. In 1712 the Fox Indians, traditional enemies of the French attacked the Illinois Confederacy, closing the trade route between Quebec and the Illinois Country. Unable to transport their fur harvest to Quebec, the French traders began to sell their products to the English. Possibly because the journey to English depots consumed less time the French coureurs de bois tended to congregate for greater periods of time in the French villages of the Mississippi Valley. Tamaroa, during these years, grew in population to forty-five French families. (41) The increase in European citizenry was not an unmixed blessing, for they were apparently a lawless lot who gave bad examples to the Indians and caused endless trouble for the missionaries. So troublesome did they become that Father Marest at Kaskaskia asked Bienville, the Governor of Louisiana, to send help to quell disorders. Jean Penicault, one of the soldiers dispatched for the purpose wrote of the situation: " . . . under the pretext of trading they openly commit scandalous crimes, debauching the women of the Illinois and turning them away from belief in our religion, thus impeding progress" (42). Even despite such bad example Penicault reported that most of the Illinois were Christians and already fairly sedentary.

After five years in the mission field M. Varlet returned to Quebec to report on the activities of his subjects. He was able to recruit three more missionaries who arived in 1718. Of the newcomers, M. Thaumur de la Source was no stranger to the country since he had accompanied the original expedition in 1698. M. Goulvin Calvarin, a **cure** from Quebec, and M. Jean Mercier accompanied him. The last named was to spend the next thirty-six years of his life caring for the Parish of Cahokia. While in Quebec, M. Varlet was appointed vicar-general for the whole Mississippi Valley country and received from the Bishop a renewal of episcopal declarations concerning the validity of the jurisdiction of the priests of the Seminary of Quebec over the area (43). The new Vicar-General did not, however. return to the field of his jurisdiction for he was recalled to France to be consecrated coadjutor Bishop of Babylon. His subsequent history is not a happy one.

With the arrival of the three new missionaries at Tamaroa the Illinois Country began to take on a new character. The home government in France had just instituted quite basic changes in the civil control of the country. Between 1712 and 1717 Louisiana was a private monopoly of Antoine Crozat, an almost fabulously wealthy Paris banker who, in spite of the almost limitless expenditures poured into his monopoly, neither found riches for himself nor peace and good order for his colonists. In August of 1717 Crozat's monopoly was declared ended and Louisiana, to which was joined the Illinois Country, was reorganized under the jurisdiction of the "Company of the West," the vital force behind which was the clever Scot, John Law. The new company obligated itself to support the missionaries and to build churches within its territory and to see to the furtherance of religion among both French and savages. (44)

The inauguration of the control of the "Company of the West" in the Illinois Country may be taken to mark the date at which Tamaroa ceases to be a mission outpost and becomes a European village in America. By the same token the Parish of Cahokia from that date forward takes on the character of a Parish, with all the parochial institutions common to parishes in France and Canada. The Directors of the "Company of the West" divided their territory into nine military districts over each of which was placed a commandant, an agent of the Company, called a Director, and a commissary officer to guard the stores on deposit for trade. Civil and criminal courts were established in each district, a step effected by appointing a provincial council which acted as a court of first instance. A fort was to be erected at the capitol of the various districts, which meant the presence of soldiery with all the inherent problems of a garrison town. The subsequent two decades of the history of Cahokia's Parish clearly reflects the influence of these innovations.

Efforts of the missionaries at Tamaroa to convert the Indians during those twenty years were constantly hindered by the ever present danger of the Fox War. After 1718 travel between Cahokia and Kaskaskia was dangerous. In 1722 the whole Peoria tribe abandoned their homes and took refuge with the Tamaroa. (45) This offered the missionaries a golden opportunity to evangelize that nation, which never accepted Christianity. Government officials at Quebec made peace with the Fox tribe that year, but carefully excluded the Illinois Country from the area in which the hostilities were to cease. The Jesuits at Kaskaskia and the priests of the Seminary at Tamaroa jointly protested to the colonial government at Quebec (46) and sent Father Beaubois, one of the Jesuits, to France, accompanied by chiefs of the Illinois tribes to protest to the Crown at such inconsiderate treatment. (47) Such a foolish peace settlement could be only a truce; and such it proved, for in 1728 open warfare again threatened the work of the missionaries among their Indian neophytes. At the command of the local military official the Tamaroa-Cahokia braves were called to help crush the Fox. The campaign, which lasted two years, ended in terrible slaughter of the Fox tribe, but not in peace for the natives. By 1732 M. Mercier, pastor of Cahokia was reporting that there was unrest among the Osage and Kansas Indians. The Illinois were also disgruntled because the French inhabitants did not respect their cultivated fields and damaged their crops.

In May of 1732 M. Mercier's warning proved all to correct when a conflict between the French and the Indians broke out at Cahokia. So serious was the disturbance that the missionaries and many of the inhabitants took refuge at Kaskaskia, fearing a general uprising and massacre. The pastor wrote: "All is confusion; we are always on the qui vive; I asked St. Ange for a guard." (48) Though the fear of general uprising proved groundless, the incident shows us that life for the missionary at Cahokia was precarious. Perhaps the bad feeling between the Indians and the French was responsible for the decision of the Peorias to leave the place and return to their own country, a step which they took in 1732. Perhaps, we may assume that the incident played some part in inducing the French to begin the practice of setting up separate villages for the Indians who had their homes close to various French villages in the Illinois Country.

To turn attention, momentarily, to conditions among the French during these same twenty years, especially to the French at Cahokia, we find that the little village has assumed the characteristics of a little cross-roads town in France. In 1724 the missionaries at Cahokia, as the village henceforth is consistently named, petitioned the Company for a grant of four square leagues of land to be used in part by the missionaries for church, cemetery and common fields and in part for agricultural purposes for the support of the mission. (49) The practicability of doing so may be gathered from the fact that already the Illinois Country was becoming the granary and source of meat for the French in Louisiana. (50)

Rendering spiritual aid to the French was concurrently encroaching on the time of the missionaries at Cahokia. To keep the Christian Frenchman in check, to teach him to respect the Indian and offer the aborigines a good example was the perennial problem. From 1720 forward the country's French floating population increased rapidly. Lead mining, begun in that year, attracted many from Louisana. Kaskaskia henceforth was always to have some soldiery. Naturally there remained the backwash of a few settlers and the flood of seasonal visits from great numbers of traders. The moral tone of these people was sufficiently low to inspire the Bishop of Quebec, in 1721, to issue a sharp pastoral letter in which he declared that he feared lest the universal disregard of religion and morality bring to the country the malediction of God. He decreed that such people whose lives were scandalous should be required to do public penance imposed by the Vicar-General. (51)

The missionaries at Cahokia had their financial problems. Though at the beginning of the enterprise in 1698 it was expected that the Crown, as was customary, would support each of the priests, very little help had come from that source. When the "Company of the West" assumed control of the area by charter obligation, the Directors were obliged to take over the support of religion. However, again the missionaries were left unsupported. In 1724 they submitted a memorial to the Directors of the Company in which they sought aid. They explained that the whole mission effort of the Seminary of Quebec, despite promises from the Crown, from the Crozat monopoly and now from the new Company, had for the most part been obliged to be borne by subsidies given by the missionaries themselves or contributed by the Seminary. The missionaries felt that such a heavy financial drain could not be carried. (52) Besides caring for the French at Cahokia, the priests of the Seminary accepted the task of pastors for the little chapel of St. Anne which the French built outside the fort at Kaskaskia. Also at about the same time a chapel was erected at Prairie du Rocher which the missionaries from Cahokia took under their care. (53) Thus even when new missionaries were added to the group in 1735 and 1739 the pastoral work among the French alone was becoming a real burden.

To digress briefly from the history of the Parish, we might profitably examine how the little French village of Cahokia was organized and how the life of the Parish fitted into the daily affairs of the people. Very early in the history of the Mississippi Valley the French Crown decreed that the civil and criminal law of this vast land would be that of the common law of the city of Paris. Villages were minors before the law, hence they had no power to alienate property once acquired. Land was held by inhabitants ordinarily in fee simple with no seignorial obligations. The chief civil official was the notary who acted as procurator and clerk of the court. Elective officials were few, but important. The Parish elected a syndic who acted as protector of the legal rights of the parish and village before the law. For the prosecution of matters of the parish the citizenry elected usually four **marguilliers,** or church-wardens who, together with the pastor, looked to all purely material matters connected with the church. Land owners were obliged to pay a tithe annually for the support of the church and the upkeep of the cemetery and the enclosure of the common fields. It is to be noted that even before the law the rights of the village are to be considered as coextensive with those of the Parish for the village, since according to the common law of the city of Paris, the village was a unit before the law only in so far as it was a parish. (54)

Here perhaps we may present our first clear description of the Parish of Cahokia after some thirty years of existence. Writing to the Governor of Louisiana at a much later date, M. Mercier informed that official that the missionaries had bought land from the Indians in 1731 so that the French might settle at Cahokia. The Governor was also told that the mission boasted a water mill, a windmill and had built a wooden bridge over the little creek near the mission. The missionaries had given land to the Indians for a village so that they might be kept apart from the French and thus avoid conflict with them. (55) A document from which we gather a detailed description of the Parish at Cahokia is the report which M. Mercier submitted to his superiors in 1735. Cahokia, we are told, is situated behind an island covered with a stand of walnut and popular. The channal of the Mississippi separating the island from the mainland is called **le Rigolet.** The missionaries have built a water-mill some distance from their dwelling near a natural waterfall. Seven pieces of the mission ground had been given to an equal number of inhabitants who were not required to render any feudal dues. The author of the report included a map of the mission grounds showing the home of the missionaries with its barns placed within an enclosure which probably served as a sort of stockade. The church was immediately outside the enclosure near which were also nine houses of French inhabitants of the village. Below the church is shown a fort and the house of the commandant of the place. Back of the mission enclosure appear barns and the common fields which are fenced. The plowlands on which the French raised their crops are shown behind the whole village and to the east of the river. The Indian village for the Tamaroa-Cahokia is located about a mile from the French settlement. The whole presents a rather scattered, hapless arrangement as would be expected in a new country where no surveyor's lines had as yet been drawn and where land was plentiful. Yet the place is a typical, if not too accurately plotted, little French village with the farmers' houses clustered about the church and the fields at a distance from the village.

After the third decade of the eighteenth century until the end of the Seven Years War we are able to present only the barest outlines of the history of the Parish. The period began auspiciously with the arrival of two new recruits for the mission field, M. Courrier and M. Gaston; but sadly also, for M. Gaston soon lost his life at the hands of the Indians. (56) Six years later Cahokia's French and Indians were drafted for a major campaign against the Chicksaws to the south who had been attracted to trade with the English, thus becoming dangerous to the French position in the Mississippi Valley. The expedition was a disastrous failure, though the Cahokia contingent arrived too late to suffer much loss in the actual conflict. (57) The defeat of the French marks a kind of turning point in their domination of the Mississippi Valley, intimately affecting the subsequent history of the Parish at Cahokia. Thus from about 1740 forward until the final defeat of France in 1763 there is constant fear of a general Indian uprising, a situation which made work for the evangelization of the natives most difficult.

Among the Indian tribes themselves the period between 1750 and 1763 is marked by sudden violent sallies against one another which in no way assisted the French missionary in his effort to Christianize them. Such an instance involved the aborigines of Cahokia in 1752 when a group of them wantonly murdered a few members of the Fox tribe they found separated from proper support. Having perpetrated the deed, the Cahokia Indians fled to their allies, the Michegamia, for protection. Retaliation soon came in the form of a ferocious attack against the Village of Cahokia. So grave was the danger and so violent the attack that the French population fled to Kaskaskia for protection. Even the missionaries abandoned their post, returning only after the attack had subsided (58).

Only two years after the Fox attack on Cahokia General Braddock at the head of English Red Coats marched into the wilderness of western Pennsylvania to attack the French at Fort Duquesne, the action which occasioned the opening of the Seven Years War which resulted in the loss to France of all her colonial possessions in America. Probably unaware of the far-reaching effects of the little skirmish between the English and the French near the present Pittsburgh, the missionaries at Cahokia were rejoiced in 1754 by the arrival of M. Francois Forget Duverger sent by the Seminary of Quebec to aid in the work of the mission. He was to see the end of the history of the Parish of Cahokia under immediate control of the Seminary of Quebec. Just a year after the arrival of M. Forget the Seminary was able to dispatch M. Nicholas Laurenz with a well equipped outfit which had cost 2,500 livres (59). But in spite of the seemingly bright prospects of new members with quite elaborate supplies to give impetus to the mission, dark days were ahead. A near world war was already in progress which was to end in success for England and the loss of the Illinois Country to the French.

From 1755 forward the French carried on a losing battle in America. Inadequately equipped and unassisted by the home government, they were obliged to watch the English slowly but inexorably move towards victory. Step by step the armies of King George moved westward establishing forts and capturing key positions. In spite of the effort of the French, by 1761 England had won the war in America. The Peace of Paris in 1763 gave the English all of French Canada and the eastern half Mississippi Valley. Hoping to save at least something, the French secretely ceded the western portion of the Valley to Spain, desperately attempting by the cession to place Spain under obligation so that at some future day France might recover the grant and perhaps the half conquered by the English.

Dark days were ahead for the Parish of Cahokia. Under alien sovereignty, uncertain as to its ecclesiastical statue, the Parish, so far removed from Quebec, could hope for nothing. In 1763, when sixty-four years old, the Parish resembled, an old and childless grandmother suddenly thrown on her own resources. The outlook seemed very bleak. But there was unknown and untested vigor in the Parish.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. Henri Fouqueray, **Histoire de la campagnie de Jesue in France** (Paris, 1925), V p. 65, 407.
2. **Catholic Encyclopedia** (New York, 1907) XIV, p. 79. The Society of the Foreign Missions of Paris is still in existence.
3. H. A. Scott, **Bishop Laval** (London, 1926) p. 149.
4. C. Rochemonteix, S.J., **Les jesuites et le nouvelle france au XVIIe Siecle** (Paris, 1896) III, p. 552.
5. J. Nick Perrin, **The History of Illinois** (Springfield, 1906) p. 40.
6. R. G. Thwaites (ed.) **Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents** (Cleveland, 1904) LIX, p. 127, 129.
7. F. W. Hodge, **Handbook of American Indians** (Washington, 1912) II, p. 137-38.
8. Thwaites, **op.cit.** LIX, p. 165-221.
9. Thwaites, **op cit.** LIX, p. 205.
10. Thwaites, **op.cit.** LX, p. 148-167.
11. P. Margery (ed.), **Decouvertes et etablissements des francais l'ouest** et dans le sud de l'amerique septentrionale (Paris, 1879) I, p. 337-38.
12. C. LeClerq, **First Establishment of the Faith in New France** (New York, 1881).
13. See the text of the Letters Patent in G. J. Garraghan, S.J., "New Lights on Old Cahokia", **Illinois Catholic Historical Review,** XI (1928), p. 104.
14. Henry Tonty succeeded to La Salle's monopoly. He built Fort St. Louis on Lake Peoria. The fort naturally attracted both Indians and French to settle about it. cf. Margry, **op.cit.** V, p. 51-52.
15. Sister Mary Borias Palm, **The Jesuits Mission of the Illinois Country, 1673-1763** (1931), p. 22-26. This is probably the best account of the Jesuit missions in the Illinois Country between 1690 and 1698.
16. The pertinent portion of the Letters Patent may be consulted in Rochemonteix, **op.cit.,** III, p. 550-51.
17. See Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 103.
18. The letters Patent granting permission to establish the mission at Tamaroa is dated July 14, 1689. Garraghan, following Rochemonteix gives the date as May 14.
19. E. A. Taschereau, **Histaire du Seminaire de Quebec chez les Tamarois ou Illinois sur les bords du Mississippi, 1849.** There is a transcript of the manuscript in the Illinois Historical Survey, Urbana. See also **Illinois Catholic Historical Review,** V (1922), p. 200 for a copy of the permission granted by Governor Frontenac. To have some idea of the difficulty of launching such an enterprise, see Thwaites, **op.cit.,** LXVI, p. 27-31 for a list of supplies assembled. J. H. Schlarman, **From Quebec to New Orleans** (Belleville, 1929), p. 131-133 gives a detailed account of goods and personnel prepared for this expedition.
20. L P. Kellogg, **Early Narratives of the Northwest, 1634-1699** (New York, 1917), p. 356. This is M. St. Cosme's letter to

Bishop St. Vallier, written while in the Arkansas country, January, 1699. See also J. G. Shea, **Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi** (Albany, 1861), p. 84. Thaumur de la Source says that there were as many people at Tamaroa as in Quebec. The estimate could hardly be taken literally. It should be explained here that for clarity it is well to adhere to the contemporary custom of referring to the priests of the Seminary of Quebec by the title "Monsieur" in order to distinguish them from the Jesuit missionaries to whom contemporaries referred as e.g. "Father" Pinet. This was the custom of the French. It might be parenthetically added that the general title of "Father" to refer to a priest is even today common usage only in English-speaking countries.

21. Kellogg, **op.cit.,** p. 355-56.
22. Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 109.
23. Scott, **op.cit.,** p. 6.
24. The most recent, and probably also most scholarly, presentation of the whole case is that of G. J. Garraghan, S.J., **Illinois Catholic Historical Review,** XI (1928), p. 99-146.
25. Document for the position of the Missionaries of the Seminary of Quebec are in the archives of the Seminary. These are chiefly the Letters Patent issued on May 1, and July 14, 1698.
26. This evaluation of the bishop is a summary of the Abbe Guguste Grosselin's opinion of the man as presented in his **L'Eglise du Canada depuis Monseigneur Laval jusqu'a la Conquete** (Quebec, 1911). The first portion of the book is really a biography of Bishop St. Vallier.
27. J. Delanglez, S.J., **The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana, 1700-1763** (New Orleans, 1935), p. 35. Davion's original letter, quoted here in part, is in the archives of the Seminary of the Foreign Missions of Paris. There is a copy of the letter in the archives of the Dominion of Canada at Ottawa.
28. Thwaites, **op.cit.,** LXV, p. 85.
29. Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 114.
30. Taschereau, **op.cit.,** p. 24.
31. Delanglez, **op.cit.,** p. 27.
32. E. J. Fortier, "The Establishment of the Tamarois Mission", **Illinois Historical Society Transactions,** XIII, p. 239. There is here described an attack of the Sioux on the Tamaroa Village.
33. **Ibid.** p. 238.
34. Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 121.
35. Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 134.
36. The village at the mouth of the River DesPeres seems to have been moved to Kaskaskia in about 1703.
37. Garraghan, **loc.cit.,** p. 133.
38. Thwaites, **op.cit.,** LXVI, p. 257.
39. Thwaites, **op.cit.,** LXVI, p. 261.
40. **Ibid.**
41. **Wisconsin Historical Collection,** XVI, p. 331.
42. Margry, **op.cit.,** V, p. 488.
43. **Ibid.**
44. Shea, **op.cit.,** p. 556, 562.

45. C. W. Alvord, **The Illinois Country** (Springfield, 1920), p. 161.
46. **Wisconsin Historical Collection,** XVI, p. 453-55.
47. **La Mercurie de France,** December, 1725.
48. Alvord, **op.cit.,** p. 171.
49. Schlarman, **op.cit.,** p. 279.
50. Alvord, **op.cit.,** p. 170.
51. J. G. Shea, **The Catholic Church in the United States** (Akron, 1892), I, p. 536.
52. Memorial regarding the establishment of the Tamaroa Mission, 1698-1724 in the archives of the Seminary of Quebec, Polygraph IX. In 1703 the King granted the missionaries an annual subsidy of 3,000 livres. The Bishop of Quebec agreed, in 1698, to donate 2,000 livres each year to the mission. He withdrew his support in 1701. See Shea, **Catholic Church in the United States,** I, p. 554.
53. Alvord, **op.cit.,** p. 200.
54. Schlarman, **op.cit.,** p. 279.
55. **Ibid.**
56. F. Beuckman, **History of the Diocese of Belleville** (Belleville, 1919), p. 13.
57. Alvord, **op.cit.,** p. 177.
58. Alvord, **op.cit.,** p. 189.
59. Beuckman, **op.cit.,** p. 13.

TRANSITIONAL YEARS 1763-1800

At no moment in her history was the Parish of Cahokia more truly a reflection of the spirit of the times as she was during the four decades of her life which now claim our attention. These are the transitional years from colonial status to independence, from civil interference in the affairs of the Church by the State to freedom from civil intervention. During the period the Church witnessed a complete change in the character of her parishioners from a homogeneous group of French farm-traders through a military invasion of English Red-Coats and ragged American Revolutionaries to the influx of Yankee traders and settlers. It was a time of uncertainty in everything, even in regard to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, a time when the flock often had no shepherd. These were stiring times for Cahokia and the Parish.

Two events of major importance for the Parish occurred in 1763. By the Peace of Paris signed in that year France surrendered all claims to her colonies in North America to her constant rival, England, who thereby extended her colonial control from the shores of the Atlantic to the eastern bank of the Mississippi River. Further, just previous to the conclusion of the peace treaty France had ceded to Spain all claims to the Louisiana country probably with a faint hope that at some future date she might be able to recover her lost colony more easily from Spain than from England. The second event, which immediately effected the life of the Parish, took place at New Orleans when the Sovereign Council there promulgated a Decree of Banishment from all French possessions of the members of the Society of Jesus. Both of these actions intimately affected the history of Cahokia's Parish. Though the change in nationality of the ownership of the Illinois Country was eventually to bring about the emigration of many of Cahokia's people to the new village of St. Louis, its immediate effects were less drastic than the banishment of the Jesuits.

Though the Parlement of Paris had issued a Decree on August 1, 1761, whereby all members of the Society of Jesus were forbidden to dwell any longer within the confines of any territory of the King of France, it was not until two years later that the act was officially made known to the local colonial government in Louisiana, of which Illinois was a district. The news reached New Orleans in July of 1763 when the Sovereign Council immediately announced the fact and began to effect the exclusion of the Jesuits. A message was forwarded to the Illinois country where on September 23, 1763, the Jesuits working at Kaskaskia and its neighboring territory were informed that their houses, churches and property were confiscated to the Crown and they were ordered to report to New Orleans for deportation. The order was executed with unnecessary harshness. The Jesuits were excluded from their dwelling, and little thought was given to their immediate needs. With unbecoming dispatch they were crowded into a batallion of boats and sent down the river with little more than clothes on their backs and sufficient food to sustain them during the journey. All their property was promptly put up at auction even down to the very candle sticks in their church. It was a black day for the religious life of the country.

At Cahokia M. Francois Forget Duverger, pastor of the Parish of the Holy Family and the last missionary sent out by the Superior of the Seminary of the Foreign Missions of Quebec, was deeply affected by the fate of the Jesuits. Whether in protest or because he believed that a similar fate awaited him, Cahokia's pastor followed the pattern of persecution inflicted upon the Jesuits. He placed the Mission of the Tamaroa with all its lands, buildings, livestock and supplies up at public auction and voluntarily joined the Jesuits being sent into exile. The Parish then owned: (1)

> ". . . . a stone house and other buildings; and likewise a plantation divided into courts, gardens and orchards measuring about three hundred and fifty feet in length and nine hundred feet in depth. . . . ; likewise a water mill for grinding corn and a plank mill with all its machinery and utensils situated on the little Cahokia River."

Besides the buildings, the Mission owned twelve negro slaves who were also sold at auction. For the whole of the possessions of the Mission the Pastor was to have received the sum of 32,500 **livres** Though the ownership of the property was unquestionably in the hands of the Seminary of Quebec, proper authority to effect the sale of the land, buildings and other property was not within the power of the incumbent pastor, as subsequent litigation was to prove. At the moment, however, the Parish at Cahokia was almost non-existent. Its property, exclusive of the church, by which the priests were enabled to carry out their work, was now alienated. The pastor had departed for France and there remained in the whole Mississippi Valley only two missionaries—the Recollet Fathers Luke and Hypolite Collet on whom fell the whole burden of the care of souls for that vast area. Both of these were advanced in years and unable to do more than make short excursions from Fort Chartres. Within a short time both were called to their eternal reward. Cahokia's hundred French and its native population of sixty warriors were without a pastor (2).

One of the exiled Jesuits, however, managed to return. Appealing to the Sovereign Council at New Orleans, Father Sebastien Louis Meurin sought permission to return to his neophytes whom he had cared for during nearly a quarter of a century. After much discussion, the Council consented to Father Meurin's petition under conditions which made the missionary's offer to go back to his mission field nothing short of an heroic decision. The Council required that the missionary declare himself subject the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction and further to agree that he would expect no financial support from anyone (3). To agree to the second condition was not difficult. But to subscribe to the first condition touched the very core of the most perplexing problem facing the Church in the Illinois Country for almost forty years. In simplest terms, the problem was to discover under whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction the Illinois Country did fall after 1763. Spain, of course, claimed the country on the west bank of the Mississippi at least as far north as the Missouri River and westward to the ocean. With her nearly three hundred years of traditionally nominating all ecclesiastical personnel, it was to be expected that Spain would certainly promptly extend her control of Louisiana into the field of church matters as she did in her dominions. But, by declaration of the Holy See, the Illinois country fell within the boundaries of the Diocese of Quebec. If Father Meurin did not agree to a demand to submit to direction from church authorities from some Spanish source he might find himself without the powers to exercise his office. On the other hand, were he to fail to adhere to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec, he might find that authority alone maintained over his mission. The missionary solved his problem by acquiesing to the demand of the Sovereign Council. He argued that if he needed to receive ecclesiastical authority for missionary work from the Spaniards he would have it by subscribing to the demands of the Council. If, on the other hand, such authority was actually proven superfluous, he could continue to administer the sacraments as a prerogative granted him by the Bishop of Quebec long ago and never rescinded (4). Satisfied regarding his own right to minister to his people from one or other source, Father Meurin returned to the Illinois Country after February of 1764, making Ste. Genevieve his residence from which place he cared for the French and Indians in the settlements.

Our only source of information for the history of Cahokia's Parish for the next few years is from the letters exchanged between Father Meurin and the Bishop of Quebec, Jean Olivier Briand. During those years the country was anything but peaceful. The Proclammation Line issued by the British as a means of excluding the seaboard population from pouring across the mountains into the newly acquired territory proved none too effectual a barrier for land speculators and Yankee traders were not to be restrained by mere orders from London (5). The Indians, under the inspiration of Pontiac were everywhere restless, a condition which prevented the English from really occupying any post in the Illinois country before October, 1765 when Captain Thomas Sterling arrived to take command at Fort Chartres. It was another three years before any sort of civil government was proposed for the people dwelling in the French villages on the banks of the Mississippi. With no solid government, the Indians a constant danger, the absence of religious influence of missionaries, it is not to be wondered at that the inhabitants of the area soon lost what little sense of security and order the past had instilled into them.

The lone missionary in the country, while he wrote frequent and lengthy letters to his Bishop, was much concerned with purely spiritual problems, hence he offers not too much detailed information about any one place. Of Cahokia, he wrote in 1768 that he was trying to recover the property which had been sold, that the people there failed to contribute to his support and that in spite of the few opportunities he had to visit them they frequented the Sacraments in numbers when he was able to be present (6). The following year Father Meurin wrote to Quebec that the people had pleaded with him to beseech the Bishop to send them a pastor. Indeed they may well have needed a shepherd for it was in that year that the famous Pontiac was murdered in their village after a night of wild dissipation (7). Perhaps the danger which faced them of a possible Indian attack from the natives aroused by the violent death of their hero at Cahokia may have had a small part in the earnest character of their request. Yet with all their faults, Father Meurin said of them that the people in the Illinois Country were probably morally better than the citizens of Quebec.

The petition for a pastor to reside at Cahokia reached Quebec at an auspicious moment. The Bishop had but recently ordained Father Pierre Gibault, a young native Canadian who had been educated at the expense of the Seminary of Quebec for the purpose of sending him to the Mississippi Valley. (8) In the spring of 1768 Father Gibault was sent westward with the Bishop's instructions to take up residence at Cahokia and evangelize the country using the old Tamaroa Mission as headquarters (9). Born in 1737 of the sturdy and impoverished Canadian Gibault stock, Pierre had received his early education from the Jesuits in Quebec. In his early youth he seems to have spent some time working in the fur brigades and may have even seen the Illinois Country (10). After this somewhat brief break in his student life, Gibault returned to the Seminary of Quebec where he studied for the priesthood, being ordained at the age of thirty-one, on March 19, 1768. That same year he was appointed to his life's work among the peoples of the Mississippi Valley. (11) Father Gibault is not a difficult charcater to understand. Always he stood for simple and straight-forward truths. He was zealous, impetuous, frequently misunderstood, probably something of a martinet, but self-sacrificing, generous and firmly on the side of what he thought was right. Often he was maligned by his neighbors, even his parishioners, and misunderstood by his superiors. But never was he forgetful of his character as Christ's missionary. Whether he was an American patriot may be controverted. But unquestionably he was a devoted and untiring pastor who spent his strength and his poor patrimony for the souls of men.

Once arrived in the mission field Father Gibault surveyed the various locations of French in the country, using the tour as the occasion to administer the Sacraments to the populance and to determine where he should settle. He found the old Tamaroa Mission at Cahokia an impossible headquarters. The church and rectory were in bad repair. The English were using them as a fort, the population had dwindled and even trade was not greatly attracted to the place (12). Hence it seemed more sensible to establish himself at Kaskaskia which was, after all, the center of the military life of the area and the more frequent market for trade. Further, Kaskaskia was geographically more central. It was agreed between Father Meruin and the newly arrived missionary that Father Gibault would care for all the villages and the native settlements from Vicennes northward while the now old sacerdotal patriarch would retire to Prairie du Rocher where he would be available and needed.

Apostolic life for the young priest began in earnest. The busy missionary gives us only brief glimpses of himself in his reports to his Bishop in Quebec. We know that he tried to visit each of the French settlements annually, baptizing the newly born infants, solemnizing marriages and caring for the sick and dying. Cahokia seems to have merited more than her share of his time for he reported that at Easter he spent some days there. Also we have one brief mention of his instructing the children (13). These few and tantalizingly brief references make up the history of Cahokia's parish for the first ten years of Father Gibault's missionary life in the Mississippi Valley. We know that they were stirring years during which the Illinios Country's British overlords did little to win the populace to loyal allegiance to George III of England. For not until 1774 when the Quebec Act was announced did the people have a fixed civil government.

It was during the crucial decade when the French saw British military governors impose upon them, using official position as a means of enriching themselves, (14) that the citizenry gave ear to plot and counterplot against the British Empire. Father Gibault could hardly have been unaware of the sentiments of his people. Alone since 1777 when Father Meruin died, the missionary was an important figure in the country, the best educated among the people and probably the most well informed. He was aware that the Bishop of Canada was pro-British, but he was also equally certain that the character of his vast parish was not only opposed to England in spirit but was rapidly becoming American in character. Even the French, though not necessarily in favor of the American cause in the war which broke out in 1775, were certainly not friendly to England from whom they had received nothing but the most inconsiderate of treatment. And as the war dragged on, month by month, with the British stirring up the natives to attack the rebelling Colonies from the rear, it was more a possibility that the Revolutionaries would attempt to muster a force to attack the trans-Allegheny country, and perhaps even march against the villages along the Mississippi River. If such a campaign should come to reality, the British could hope for little support from the French, no matter what attitute these disgusted and alien subjects of King George might take towards the invading Americans.

When George Rogers Clark executed his surprise attack on Kaskaskia on the night of July 4, 1778, he found the French quite willing to receive him. Once assured that the Americans would respect his Catholicity, Father Gibault not only offered no objection to Clark, but furthered the cause of the Revolutionaries by lending the weight of his presence to the expedition against Vincennes. Cahokia, too, fell into the hands of the Virginian whose lieutenant Joseph Bowman marched thither with only thirty men to subdue a village which could boast a population of a hundred families, according to Clark's own estimate (15). On entering the town Captain Bowman addressed the citizens, urging them to make no resistence, but to accept his offer to subscribe to the Revoluntionary cause as their friends at Kaskaskia had done two days before. Urged on by friends from Kaskaskia who had accompanied Captain Bowman, the Cahokians wisely offered no resistance, but announced themselves ready to change their allegiance. Fortunately for Cahokia, Captain Bowman was placed in charge of the village by his commander, Clark. The Captain soon came to be known and appreciated by his neighbors to whom he gave opportunity to establish a civil court. To show their esteem for the Captain, when elections were held for officers of the court, Captain Bowman was promptly chosen president (16).

In the fall, General Clark assembled all the tribes of the West whom he could attract for a great council to attempt to win their loyalty for the Revolutionaries. Camped before the Church in Cahokia were some four hundred warriors of the Sioux, Miami, Fox, Chippewa, Illinois, Ottawa and Potawatomi Indians. With characteristic dignity the council listened to the speeches of General Clark and their own leaders. Treaty presents were exchanged and the pipe of peace smoked to show undying friendship between the great Indian leaders and their friends, the Americans. The council was good drama, but unsuccessful as a means of keeping the peace for under English impetus the natives soon broke their promise and continued to keep Illinois Country unsettled and insecure (17).

John Gilmary Shea, eminent historian, would have us believe that Cahokia had as pastor during these rousing times the future Bishop of Quebec, Joean Francois Hubert, (18) whom Shea holds was in Cahokia during 1778 and 1779. Certainly Hubert was Vicar-General of the Illinois Country for the Bishop of Quebec during those years, but it is highly unlikely that he was actually in residence at Cahokia. Nothing in all the contemporary literature indicates his presence, a fact which could hardly have gone unnoticed. Thus we conclude that Cahokia's Parish had no resident pastor at one of the greatest moments in her history. Across the river in the village of St. Louis the Spanish officials from New Orleans had appointed the Capuchin, Father Bernard de Limpach as pastor. It was this gentle priest, a native of Zwibruecken, who seems to have cared for the spiritual welfare of Cahokia from the time of his arrival in St. Louis until about 1783. He certainly visited Cahokia as 1784 for he recorded in the Parish Burial Record for that year that on June 21 he buried the four year old son of Francois Saucier (19). With the conclusion of Father Bernard's ministry at Cahokia an era comes to an end for the Parish. For eighty-four years the Parish, and the territory in which it is, was the possession of one or other of the countries of Europe. After Clark's invasion the new Republic, still in its first decade of existance, looked upon the Illinois country as its own. Even ecclesiastical authorities at Rome subscribed to this position for henceforth Cahokia looked to Baltimore for its pastors. As yet American in little more than name, it soon becomes so in fact.

The first of Cahokia's pastors to receive appointment from an American ecclesiastical superior was Father Paul de St. Pierre, a Carmelite, who had come to America as chaplain with the forces of the Comte de Rochambeau. When the Americans had successfully concluded their battle for independence and their allies, the French, withdrew the troops sent to aid in the cause, Father St. Pierre remained in America, offering his services for mission work in the West (20). Because the terms of the Treaty of Paris recognized that American civil authority extended to the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, Father John Carroll, who had been appointed Apostolic Superior of the Thirteen Colonies in November of 1738 and was shortly to be consecrated first Bishop of the United States, considered that his jurisdiction was probably coextensive with the boundaries of his new country (21). Thus Father Ferdinand Farmer, Vicar-General at Philadelphia, granted to Father de St. Pierre faculties to exercise the ministry in the Illinois Country. Msgr. Carroll approved of the Vicar-General's action and Father de St. Pierre left for the West where he was to spend forty-three fruitful years After approximately three years of residence at Kaskaskia, during which time he probably also cared for Cahokia's spiritual needs, Father St. Pierre was directed to turn over the pastoral duties at Kaskaskia to his successor, Father Louis Ignatius Guignas, and to take up residence in Cahokia, where he was to remain until 1789.

The three years of Father de St. Pierre's charge of the Parish at Cahokia were far from pleasant. Physically, the Parish buildings were in ruins. A fire in 1783 had made the Church unsuitable for use (22). The Rectory had been used as a fort. Most of the other buildings were in disrepair.. Further, there was the vexing question of ownership of the property formerly possessed by the priests of the Seminary of Quebec. Having once been illegally sold at public auction, it was quite unlikely that the present, presumed owners would be willing to restore what they considered was lawfully theirs by right of purchase. Added to the mere physical difficulties were the unsettled circumstances of the times, the unfavorable conflict between French and Americans as they struggled through the process of amalgamation into one people. Changes in law and customs, while inevitable under the circumstances, did not make for happy relations, even in the case of Father de St. Pierre whose people so esteemed him that they even defended him against accusations made by the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Canada.

A brief recounting of a few instances in which Father de St. Pierre sought the help of civil authority indicates to us his efforts to act as a real shepherd for his flock. In 1786 he appealed to the court to require the enforcement of the law prohibiting sale of liquor to the Indians. The following year the Pastor required that the Church Wardens all take an oath that none of them had hidden valuable papers which had been entrusted to their keeping. In 1789 there was a rather heated controversy between the Pastor and his people concerning the question of each family furnishing in turn a supply of bread which was blessed at the parish Mass and portioned out to all present. Though the matter seems trivial, Father de St. Pierre probably considered it fundamental. This was an old custom among the French, probably introduced in France by St. Gregory of Tour as a small but effective means of indicating the unity of their Faith to the people. Again the Pastor petitioned the court to require the return of some lumber confiscated by one or other of the villagers. Some complaints are registered against the Pastor by his people, for instance he was said to have not cared for supplies given him (23). In our day so much legal action would be indicative of serious conflict between pastor and people. But it is to be remembered that the French of the eighteenth century were much given to litigation to which little stigma was attached for either side of a given suit.

Perhaps the most onerous trial suffered by Father de St. Pierre during his years as Pastor of Cahokia came from the confusion which existed about ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Illinois country, a state of affairs which continued until 1792. Bishop Carroll in Baltimore and Bishop Hubert in Quebec quickly worked out a practical **modus vivendi** whereby appointees sent to the Illinois country could be granted faculties for the ministry by the American Bishop in the name of the Bishop of Quebec. On the frontier itself, situations were bound to arise in which conflict would have its origin more in personalities than in the principles at stake. Such a situation came to pass between Father de St. Pierre and Father Pierre Huet de La Valiniere, Vicar General of Bishop Carroll who assumed the office of pastor at Kaskaskia after 1786 (24). Something of a hotspur, Father de La Valiniere was a Sulpician who came to Canada from France as a young man with the intention of working among the Indians. Ordained in 1755, he spent twenty years in Canada during which he did a bit of everything, teaching, parish work and other ecclesiastical labors without staying long in one place or occupation. During the American Revolution he was stationed at Detroit where his sympathy to the American Cause was not to the liking of the Bishop of Quebec, Jean Olivier Briand who directed that the Sulpician be recalled to France and allowed to return to North America only after the Revolution was ended. On his return he came to the Mississippi Valley where he acted as Vicar-General and pastor of Kaskaskia. In this capacity he treated his two 'subjects', Father de St. Pierre and Father Pierre Gibault in a none too friendly fashion (25).

It was, perhaps, because of the conflict between Father de La Valiniere and himself that Father de St. Pierre finally decided to abandon the Illinois country and seek refuge within the dominion of Spain. The basis of the trouble is not too clear. Father de St. Pierre was chided by Father de La Valiniere for having witnessed a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic during Lent and one or two other such matters. The Vicar-General seems to have been quite vindictive, appealing directly to the people of Cahokia against their pastor. Probably much to his surprise, the people clearly resented Father de La Valiniere's attitude and insisted that their Pastor was a man of sanctity, devotedness and a source of great comfort to his people (26). Though the whole matter was finally settled in favor of Cahokia's Pastor and the Vicar-General was recalled to Canada, Father de St. Pierre received permission from the ecclesiastical authorities of Louisiana to attach himself to the area (27). He left Cahokia in 1789 and spent thirty-seven more years in the lower Mississippi Valley, finally passing to his reward in 1826. His brief three years as Cahokia's pastor were important to the Parish for Father de St. Pierre revivified his people, confirming old customs, revitalizing traditions, encouraging his people to plan a new church and recalling the flock to their religious life.

Not the least of Father de St. Pierre's contribution to the future of the Parish at Cahokia was that he sufficiently aroused the people to reposses the property of the old Mission which had been auctioned off illegally nearly twenty-five years before. On the 6th of June, 1787 a committee of the parishioners wrote a lengthy letter to the authorities of the Seminary of Quebec informing them that the property once lost to them was again recovered in their name. The document describes how the members of the parish had discovered that the sale had been made without the consent of the owners and how they promptly investigated and filed suit to have it repossessed. There is a verbal description of the old Mission as it was after a quarter of century of neglect. The gardens and orchards had been all but obliterated. All the buildings were in ruins, particularly the rectory which had been used as a barracks by the English and American troops who had defaced the walls and ruined the interior. The church was in equally bad condition. The committee informed the Canadian owners that the parish had already erected a rectory at the cost of 5,000 **livres** and that plans were well advanced for the building of a new church which they hoped would be a credit to their village (28). Of their pastor they wrote:

> We cannot sufficiently praise M. de St. Pierre, our priest and present missionary. He has all capacity, zeal and charity both for the teaching and instruction of the faithful and for his ecclesiastical duty. We desire to be able to keep him and pray you to be kind enough to agree to it and to influence Monseigneur to agree, so that he is willing to send to us the commands of our mission.

But Father de St. Pierre had already approached the Spanish ecclesiastical authorities and had been accepted as the pastor of St. Genevieve in the present state of Missouri, whence he arrived in early September of 1789, leaving Father Pierre Gibault to assume office as Cahokia's new pastor.

The story of the Parish between 1789 and 1792, while Father Gibault cared for the people of Cahokia is indeed obscure. There is much of the doings of the Pastor recorded and little of the history of the Parish. Perhaps we may account for this by the fact that Father Gibault may not have been too acceptable to his flock, who had known him for many years. Ten years before, the people had objected when Gibault had exercised power of attorney, granted by the Seminary of Quebec, to sell some of the property which had belonged to the Mission, though the very power of attorney had prohibited such an alienation (29). When a similar incident occured a year after Father Gibault's return, the people protested, declaring that the Pastor was not authorized to sell parcels of the parochial lands. Their sharply worded complaint, sumitted to Governor Arthur St. Clair insists that: (30)

> . . . this sale is in every point unfair, obreotuous, and made by M. Gibault without the authority or personal qualification,

> a secret and wrongful sale, tending to deprive us of our property in the most iniquituous manner. He has manifestly defrauded the inhabitants of this district.

In defense of Father Gibault's action, it should be remembered that the priest had every reason to feel that his authority as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Quebec granted him the right to decide whether property should be sold. Further we know that he had already declared himself destitute of funds and had asked Governor St. Clair to obtain a grant of a few lots in Cahokia for him (31). Such an action on Father Gibault's part would seem to indicate, perhaps that his people were not contributing to the support of their Pastor, whose work for them apparently lacked nothing in zeal. This latter apostolic effort can be judged from the record of his two years of residence as gleaned from the burials at which he officiated. Gibault was present at the obsequies of thirty-six persons, to many of whom he administered the last Sacraments. He often commented on the fact of the evident signs of contrition manifested by the dying. Whatever was the true relationship between Father Gibault and his people at Cahokia, the last of Canada's sacerdotal contributions to the Illinois country left it in October of 1791 to cross over into Louisiana Territory, under Spanish domination, where Father Gibault took up the work of caring for the people of the Spanish settlement at New Madrid. This was probably a sad departure for the fifty year old priest who had spent nearly twenty-five years almost single-handed caring for the French in the Mississippi Valley. His departure took on something of the character of exile. Bishop Carroll was displeased with him for petitioning a grant of land from the government. His own ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop of Canada held him in none too good repute for his support of the American Cause during the Revolution. Hence, as a sort of man without a country, he became a kind of begger at the door of the Spanish ecclesiastical authorities who received him.

With the departure of Father Gibault a new and more orderly era began for the Parish in Cahokia. With the appointment of Father John Carroll as Bishop of Baltimore, November 6, 1789, with ecclesiastical authority over all the Faithful and their pastors within the confines of the United States, the basic problem of divided jurisdiction came to an end. Clearly the authority of the new Bishop was coextensive with the confines of the United States, which included the Illinois Country and, of course, the Parish of Cahokia. A further fortunate circumstance was the coincidence of Bishop Carroll's presence in Europe for his consecration at a moment when the French Revolution caused the emigration from France of so many of the members of the French clergy who were, of course, anxious to find a field in which to labor. Among these were a number of the members of the Congregation of St. Sulpice to whom Bishop Carroll appealed to come and establish a Seminary in his diocese and assist in caring for the people, especially the French in the Mississippi Valley.

On January 29, 1792, Bishop Carroll wrote to his confrere, Bishop Hubert of Quebec: "I am expecting this spring a few well chosen ecclesiastics from France to serve in the Illinois and at Post Vincennes" (32). The "few well chosen ecclesiastics" were spiritual giants most of whom were to become the earliest members of the hierarchy in America. Almost all of them were Sulpicians, highly educated men who had held important posts in their Congregation in France. In the first group to arrive in America, in 1791, was Father Michael Levadoux, former Director of the Sulpician Seminary at Limoges. The next year saw the arrival of Father Benedict Joseph Flaget and his companion, Father Stephen T. Baden Two years later the ranks of the Sulpicians in America were swelled by the arrival of Father John Rivet and Father William Louis Du Bourg who were accompanied by two brothers, members of the diocesan clergy, Fathers Jean Baptiste and Donatien Olivier. All of these, at one time or another, guided the flock of Cahokia either as its Pastor or as its Bishop. Under their leadership the Parish probably reached to greater heights of religious vitality than its had seen in the nine decades before.

By 1792, when the first of the Sulpicians, Father Levadoux, came to Cahokia, the Illinois country, so long without peace or order, was well on the way to obtaining both. Included within the Northwest Territory which was organized by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Cahokia could boast that it had even the benefits of county government for Governor Arthur St. Clair established St. Clair County in 1790 and appointed the proper official for caring for its business. By the same declaration Cahokia became the seat of one of the three judicial districts of the county, with John De Moulin as chief justice and William St. Clair, a distant relative of the Governor, as clerk of the court (33). These were the years, too, of Cahokia's short era of prosperity. Nicholas Jarrot and William Morrison, both successful merchants settled at Cahokia, probably giving employment to the townsfolk and buying up the country's agricultural surplus. Cahokia could point to local characters whose fame has come down to us. There was Isaac Darnielle, something of a Illinois Lord Chesterfield who dabbled in land, dressed with the utmost care, acted as court of appeal in legal opinions and fashions and was accepted as the living example of things cultural. Equally as famous was Madam Brady, the wife of Thomas Brady, whose influence over the Indians was a by-word in the country. Such was her power over them that even when they were determined on war she could, single-handed, quiet them and bring them to their senses. The Sheriff of the County, John Hay, was in his own right a figure of note. Combining the offices of sheriff and postmaster, this one-time member of the merchant firm of Todd and Hay came to be the perennial sign of law and order for the Village and the County (34).

While we can learn much about purely civil matters in Cahokia between 1792 and 1799, we are left in the dark concerning the activities of the Parish, save for bare outlines of the names of successive pastors, a very little about their work and the single, but important fact that the chief interest of the Parish was the building of the new church. For the record, Father Michael Levadoux appears to have come to Cahokia to take charge of the Parish in the summer of 1792. For the next three years the Burial Record is signed with sufficient regularity to indicate that his residence there was probably continuous. To him, perhaps, is due the real impetus for building the old church which is still standing (35). On Father Levadoux's appointment in 1796 as Vicar-General of the area, Cahokia seems to have had no resident pastor during the coming three years. During the period Father Charles Leander Lusson, a Recollet, had been appointed to the post of Cahokia by Bishop Carroll. He remained but a few months, from December of 1797 to April of 1798 when he crossed the Mississippi and joined the Spanish whence he never returned (36). For the rest of that year and a great part of the next, 1799, spiritual care of Cahokia fell to the charge of Father Jean Rivet, a Sulpician who had succeeded Father Levadoux as Vicar-General when the latter moved to the Detroit area. Infrequently Dom Peter Joseph Didier, of the Congregation of St. Maur, pastor in St. Louis, visited the people of Cahokia and cared for them. At length in 1799 Bishop Carroll dispatched the two brother, Jean Baptiste and Donatien Olivier to the west with orders that Father Jean was to take up residence at Cahokia. He it was who could celebrate the first centenary of the existence of the Parish of the Holy Family of Cahokia.

In the archives of the Parish of Cahokia is to be found the following record: (37)

> On September 24 [?], 1799 M. Jean Olivier being Pastor of the Church of the Kahokias [sic], Michael Beaulieu being First Church-Warden, Joseph Trottier being Second Church-Warden, Louis Pencenneau [sic] being Third Church-Warden, We, the undersigned Vicar-General of the Diocese, have solemnly blessed under the name and invocation of the Good Shepherd the new church of the Kahokias and have celebrated in in the Holy Sacrafice of the Mass for the first time in the presence of a number of people.
>
> At the Kahokias on the same day and year
> **J. fr. Rivet.**

In preparation for the opening of their new church, of which the parishioners must certainly have been justly proud, the Church-Wardens drew up new regulations, the contents of which give us an insight into the life of Cahokia's parish more clearly than one would expect. In quite solemn fashion the Church-Wardens declare: (38)

> Because the lack of a wise and well-ordered set of regulations is the most common cause of disorder in all operations, and as churches in particular cannot maintain themselves on a respectable footing except in-so-far as their rights are assured and their revenues wisely administered, we, the inhabitants of Cahokia, have a duty to establish for our new Church the subjoined regulations.

"The sujoined regulations" are, to us, nothing short of unique. The parishioners are informed that each pew shall be auctioned to the highest bidder who shall receive "ground-right" to his pew. which piece of church furnishing seems to have been supplied by the individual to whom ground right for the pew was assigned by auction sale. The Church-Wardens oblige themselves to keep a record both of ground-right and of pews and those who have a right to each. Further these responsible lay authorities impose upon themselves the obligation of collecting all fees which are due to the Church from pew rent.

A strikingly effective means was adopted for insuring proper revenue for the Church. Each year all those who owed contributions to the Church were obliged to sign a note of indebtedness and file it with the Church-Wardens. Before the retiring First Church-Warden relinquished office the notes were to be auctioned off to the highest bidder who, of course, then became owner of the notes. The regulations forbade the First Church-Warden to leave office before he had settled all such financial matters which had arisen during his term of office. Unfortunately there does not appear to be extant evidence to judge how the system operated in practice.

The system of electing Church-Wardens is described in detail. The retiring First Church-Warden had the privilege of nominating a panel of three honorable persons, one of whom was chosen by the voice of the people. The newly-elected Church-Warden became Third in command and eventually, in his turn, succeeded to the office of First Church-Warden. Let it not be thought that this democratic method is an innovation introduced with the influx of Americans. Such a system appears to be traditional as was the office of Church-Wardens in French parishes. Even the more significant fact that in matters of major moment the whole parish was called together and asked to assist in deliberations was not new to Cahokia, but rather a continuance of a custom as old as the parishes in Paris.

The great respect which was paid to the dead is demonstrated in the regulations brought into force in 1799. The Parish is informed that no one shall be buried in the Cemetery who has neglected to care for that part of its fencing which was assigned to him. If anyone should neglect the duty of furnishing pickets or replacing such as might have been destroyed, the Church-Wardens assert authority to constrain the responsible person to fulfill his duty. The beadle of the Parish is obliged to keep the Cemetery neat and free of debris as well as to see to the fencing. Should that officer fail in his duty the Church-Wardens give themselves authority to refuse payment for his other services.

With typical French inclination to distinguish and subdistinguish the Church-Wardens issued in their regulation detailed instructions as to the disposition of ground-right and pew rent for all sorts of cases. There is, for example, a quite lengthy article devoted to the procedure to be followed in case a widow marries and thus assumes a new name. Quite plainly the purpose of the individual article is to preserve the family name of the original owner of the given position in the Church. In the same vein, there is carefully preserved the opportunity for any of the established members of the parish who must temporarily move away to reacquire their old pew and its perquisites. We can feel in these minute regulations the desire for family stability and respect for tradition, a trait which deserves our admiration.

The last article of the regulations merits repetition in its entirety as an example of the detailed character of the whole: (39)

> Art. 20. We neglected to state above that there should be no chairs carried into the Church to aisles or pews except with the consent of the responsible Church-Warden and that for each chair placed in the Church for use the particular person shall pay the Church-Warden one dollar annually for rent and the chair shall remain later for the use of the Church without being reclaimed by the one who shall have brought it. Also the pews which particular persons shall cause to be made, remain later as the property of the Church.

Because the "new Church," may probably be the oldest church structure in the Mississippi Valley, (40) it is not unfitting to include in this history of Cahokia's Parish a description of the edifice: (41)

> The church was built upon a stone foundation 34x74 feet. The walls are hewn walnut logs placed upright and leaning in from the perpendicular about eight inches. The sides of the logs facing each other are beveled to a depth of two inches to receive and hold the mixture of stone and mortar with which the intersticies are filled. The logs are securely mortised into heavy timbers below and above and braced at each angle of the building. Not a nail was used in the entire structure, but huge wooden pegs were employed where needed. The roof timbers are oak, squared to the dimensions of four x four inches, and originally were covered with cypress clapboards. Wide sycamore boards cover the floor which slopes gently from the front wall to the altar rail with a fall of six inches.

Tradition has it that the wood used in constructing the new church was cut from the trees standing on Cahokia's Common. The walnut logs for the exterior walls and the cottonwood flooring as well as the cyprus clapboards were all hand hewn on the site under the direction of the brothers Voudrie who acted as contractors for the building. They received payment for their effort, we are told, partly in money and partly in peltries and wheat. (42) It is to be regretted that we are unable to ascertain whether the still existing edifice erected in 1799 was built on the same location as the church which had been destroyed by fire in 1783. When restored to its original condition the century old building will present, as it did when new, an appearance of graceful dignity in keepig with its setting. There is a certain atmosphere of restrained, rugged strength to be felt about the old church which has weathered a hundred years of life. When its modern protective covering of wooden siding has been removed and the solid walnut logs with alternate fillings of rough plastering again appear the church will stand as a kind of ocular evidence of the character of the staunch Canadians who founded the village and the Parish. (43)

At the close of its first hundred years of its existence the Parish of Cahokia could look back on a task well done. Slowly and patiently the Parish influenced both savage and European, moulding them to the Christian ideal. With a new era before her the Parish now was to begin anew the quiet, persistent effort to guide the lives of men in a new day under a new government. The Parish was to prove capable for the task.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. C. W. Alvord and C. E. Carter (eds.), **The Critical Period, 1763-1765** (Springfield, 1915), p.48.
2. Alvord and Carter, **op.cit.,** p.5.
3. J. Rothensteiner, **History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis** (St. Louis, 1928), I, p. 11.
4. The best discussion of Father Meurin is to be found in a series of articles on the subject by C. H. Metzger, S. J., **Illinois Catholic Historical Review III** (1921), p. 241-259, 371-388, IV (1921) p. 43-56.
5. For example, the trading company of Baynton, Wharton and Morgan had opened a store in Cahokia as early as 1768. See Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics, 1767-1769** (Springfield, 1921), p. 362.
6. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.309.
7. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.561.
8. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.421.
9. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.613,616.
10. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.537.
11. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.294-297.
12. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.614-618.
13. Alvord and Carter, **Trade and Politics,** p.609,624.
14. C. W. Alvord, **The Illinois Country,** p.266.
15. James A. James, **The George Rogers Clark Papers** (Springfield 1912), p.612.
16. C. W. Alvord (ed.),**Cahokia Records** (Springfield,1909),I,p.2.
17. Alvord, **Illinois Country,** p.331.
18. J. G. Shea, **The Catholic Church in the United States,** II,p.183.
19. Burial records of the Holy Family Parish, Cahokia, Illinois, 1784-1819." These are preserved in the archives of the Parish. They constitute the earliest archival material on the Parish still in existence. All previous records were destroyed by various fires.
20. J. Rothensteiner, "Paul de St. Pierre, the First German-American Priest of the West," **Illinois Catholic Historical Review** V(1919), p.201.
21. **Ibid.**
22. This seems to be the third church to be built in Cahokia. A log chapel was erected in 1699 which was replaced before 1735. Fire destroyed that structure in 1735. The building was replaced by 1740. This second church was also destroyed by a fire in 1783.
23. Alvord, **Cahokia Records,** I, p.215,393,351.
24. M. I. J. Griffin, "Catholics and the American Revolution," **American Catholic Historical Researches** XXIII(1905),p.219.
25. Shea, **op.cit.,** II, p.466.
26. Griffin, **loc.cit.** p.225. See also Alvord, **Cahokia Records** II, p.555.
27. Alvord, **Cahokia Records** II, p.560-567.
28. Alvord **Cahokia Records** II, p.79.
29. C. E. Carter (ed.), **Territorial Papers of the United States** (Washington, (1934), II, p.251.

30. **Ibid.**
31. Shea, **op.cit.** II, p.382
32. Carroll to Hubert, Archdiocesan Archives, Quebec.
33. J. Reynolds, **The Pioneer History of Illinois** (Chicago, 1887), p.156-57.
34. Reynolds, **op.cit.,** p.160, 211, 221, 168, 227.
35. Rothensteiner, **History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis,** I,p.188.
36. Shea. **The Catholic Church in the United States,** II, p.460.
37. Parish Archives, Cahokia.
38. **Ibid.**
39. **Ibid.**
40. C. E. Peterson, "Notes on Old Cahokia," **The French American Review** I (1948), p.204-205.
41. **Ibid.**
42. F. Beuchmann, **History of the Diocese of Belleville** (Belleville, 1919) p.19.
43. It is to be noted that Beuchmann and Hynes differ somewhat in describing the materials used in constructing the church. For example, Beuchmann says that the floor was made of cottonwood while Hynes says the floor was of sycamore.

THE PARISH, 1800-1883

Should the student of the history of Cahokia's Parish consider that the record of its first century was one of trials and troubles, let him not think that the subsequent ten decades might manifest a change of character. From 1800 forward for at least half a century Cahokia and her more prosperous neighbor, St. Louis, acted as the two pillars on which swung the gate to the American Far West, the new Eldorado of the Nineteenth Century. While most of the romantic characters of the West passed through the portals, many a less daring adventurer hesitating before the face of danger settled down at the threshold to take up a minor role, increasing Cahokia's racial and social problems. These first fifty years of the Nineteenth Century were for the Parish a time of adjustment to new forms of government, to new methods of business, to even new and confusing changes in ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For one who wishes to recount the story of these years, the surviving sources from which the story might be gleaned are inadequate. Because priests were so few in number and so busy, records are reduced to bare essentials. Again, Cahokia's Parish fell within the jurisdictional changes of five different dioceses in less than a century. We cannot hope, therefore, to reconstruct a detailed account of the second hundred years of the Parish. But we can recall the major events, the work of the more important Pastors and the general life of the Parish.

We have two divergent opinions of Cahokia at the opening of the Nineteenth Century. The first gives us a sort of Currier and Ives word painting of an ideal little French village, isolated from a bustling world: (1)

> . . . scarcely any language was spoken except French and Indian in this village. The inhabitants emigrated either from Canada or the Southern French settlements so that the French language amongst the inhabitants was altogether in use. The citizens were almost entirely French and professed universally the Roman Catholic Religion. They were a gay, lively people taking the time present for happiness and themselves and permitting the future to regulate itself. In the winter the people danced and frolicked away the time with more pleasure and happiness than any people can do, who give all their attention to the time to come. The young men voyaged all summer for the means to enjoy the winter while the older inhabitants cultivated the fields, which produced for them a great abundance of necessities of life. Thus it was that these people, remote from all vices and civilized sins of mankind lived out ages and ages in innocent happiness; they did it in 1800.

Our second view of the people of Cahokia in 1800 is obtained from a letter of Father Jean Baptiste Olivier, newly appointed Pastor of the Parish. It seem to him that: (2)

> The people had lost much of their former zeal and piety; vices prevailed and the women were extravagant, spending

much on dress, on coffe and sugar, expensive luxuries in those parts.

Perhaps the actual condition of the people of Cahokia in 1800 is somewhere between the two opinions. The Village was then composed of some eight hundred people who supported themselves partly by the Indian trade and partly by agriculture. The vexing question of land titles was being settled by the new government and its Congress. Americans were beginning to settle in the French villages where they established stores, competed with the French in the Indian trade and probably considered the customs and traditions of this remote little French center very strange and inferior to things Anglo-American which they had known in the Ohio Valley or east of the Allegheny Mountains.

Actually life in the Parish during the first couple of decades of the Nineteenth Century does not seem to have changed too precipitately. In spite of the presence of many Americans, for the three years during which Father Jean Baptiste Olivier acted as Pastor, the records of burials remain quite normal. In the absence of the official parish records of marriages, we have civil records of petitions for permission to marry which show that between 1800 and 1807 the French in the Mississippi Valley continued to intermarry and have their marriages, whenever possible, solemnized in the presence of the priest. There are only two instances of marriages between a person of French background and an American. The marriage contracts are made with the customary French fulsomeness, giving the signatures of innumerable witnesses. There is even one example of the marriage of two slaves. Even here the contract lacks none of the customary solemnity habitual on such occassions. (3)

For the four years between 1799 and 1803, immediately after the opening of Cahokia's new church, Father Jean Baptiste Olivier (4) held the office of pastor. Troubled conditions in New Orleans, however, induced Bishop Carroll to relieve his subject of that office and send him to New Orleans to act as chaplain to the Ursuline convent and assume the post of Vicar General. With his brother's departure, Father Donatien Olivier was left alone to care for all the little parishes of western Illinois between Kaskaskia and Cahokia. Unable to give much time to any one of his many charges, Father Donatien attempted to make up for the lack of the constant presence of a priest in each village by frequent visits to all. During the forty years which Father Donatien Olivier cared for the souls of the area he came to be respected and loved as a simple and very devout priest who knew his people and served them as a father, his children. (5) Though Father Donatien Olivier was never officially Cahokia's Pastor, yet his work for the parish was ever unceasing in the absence of others.

Five years after Father Jean Baptiste Olivier's departure for New Orleans Cahokia was included in the new diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky which was established in 1808 with Benedict Josep Flaget as its first Bishop. The French of the Mississippi Valley were no strangers to the newly appointed Bishop who had worked among them at Vincennes. Born at Avergne in France in 1763, he attended the Sulpician Seminary of Clermont where Father Gabriel Richard had been his teacher. In 1791 he volunteered for the Missions in America whence he came the next year and was sent to Vincennes. After two years there he was recalled and dispatched to Cuba to attempt to open a school. When the venture failed Father Flaget returned to America where he was appointed Bishop of Bardstown, a new diocese which comprised all of the old Northwest Territory. Within this vast area he could almost literally number on the fingers of one hand all the priests available to care for the religious needs of his people.

Almost contemporaneous with the appointment of Bishop Flaget there came to hand what seemed like a fortunate solution for the problem of the scarcity of priests in the western portion of the new diocese. In 1802 a group of Cistercian Trappists from France under the leadership of Dom Urban Guillet had come to the United States to establish a foundation. After three years in Pennsylvania and four years in Kentucky, where the monks had unsuccessfully attempted to establish a school and build a permanent monestary, the group again moved westward, settling on land donated for that purpose by Nicholas Jarrot, wealthy merchant and prominent citizen of Cahokia. Nine miles northeast of Cahokia stands Monks Mound, an artificial earthern Indian mound nearly a thousand feet long, about seven hundred feet wide and ninty feet high. At the base of this vast relic of an ancient civilization the monks established the monastery of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. Erecting rude cabins the community made a fresh start at permanency, but again without success. After four years of severe hardships, much illness, untold difficulties over land titles and innumerable misunderstandings, the monks admitted defeat and returned to their native France.

Though the monks were contemplatives and cloistered by rule, the absence of priests in the country to care for the souls of the neighborhood induced them to allow some of the priests of the community to the care of parishes of Cahokia, St. Charles and St. Louis. Parish records of burials at Cahokia testify that the Superior of the Trappists, Dom Urban, visited the Parish in times of need. Surviving letters of the Superior, written to Bishop Plessis of Quebec afford us a few glimpses of Cahokia's Parish during the years the Trappists were near the Village. It may be said that Dom Urban did not hold his neighbors in high esteem either in their religious or economic life. This simple, pious, religious man found Cahokia something of a trail. He considered the parishioners to be quite lax in their morality and negligent of the property belonging to the Parish. Strangely, though the Church was but a few years old, Dom Urban found it in such disrepair that he refused to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in it until repairs had been made. One gathers from his letters to the Bishop of Quebec that the Superior felt that the people of Cahokia were lacking in generosity to his community and were quite bereft of understanding with regard to the nature of the life which his community attempted to live. (6)

By way of legitimately excusing the Cahokians, it is not improper to indicate that undoubtedly they found this group of contemplatives something of a puzzle. Not many of the people of Cahokia had seen the traditional monastic life as it was commonly known to Europeans. In America the clergy were universally given to active apostolic labors. Thus it undoubtedly did present a problem to the Village to be without a pastor while only a few miles away they knew there were at least a few priests. In any case, Cahokia's lack of a priest to minister to the people was filled in 1811 with the appointment by Bishop Flaget of Father Francis Louis Savine (Savigne) who cared for the spiritual needs of Holy Family Parish for the coming sixteen years. This appointment is said to have been one of Bishop Flaget's first official acts. (7) A Canadian by birth, Father Savine was the last of a long line of pastors for Cahokia to have come from Canada. Within twenty years after his departure from Cahokia a description of the man appeared in the Belleville **Weekly:** (8)

> He was a very large, stout man, more than ordinarily inclined to obesity, and was blessed with a countenance which never wore a frown, and which always seemed so kind, so good humored, that you could not help saying to yourself when you looked upon it, "There is a man who loves everybody, whom everybody loves and with whom God must be well pleased."

After Father Savine had been pastor for two years Bishop Flaget was able to visit the western outposts of his diocese. He came to Cahokia after a quite lengthy stay at Vincennes where he had been profoundly saddened by conditions at his former mission post. Vincennes had lost much of its religious spirit since the days when the former Father Flaget had worked there in 1792. One can sense the feeling of relief and consolation which the Bishop enjoyed while he visited Cahokia from June 18 to July 8, 1813. He found the Parish in excellent condition, the religious life of the place at a vigorous level, and the Parish even free from any financial worries. He could report: (9)

> Everything was in fine order; the congregation was free from debt and had a surplus in the treasury. What was still more consoling was the spirit which animated the people and the knowledge of their religion and duties which they displayed.

The Bishop's visitation became a sort of unofficial mission during which the episcopical visitor himself acted as the missionary, preaching frequently, hearing Confessions and preparing the people for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the children for their First Communion. On June 26 the Bishop administered Confirmation to one hundred and eighteen persons. As far as can be ascertained this was the first occasion on which the Parish received a visitation from its Bishop and probably also the first time there had been an opportunity to prepare the people for the reception of Confirmation.

When Bishop Flaget had completed his visitation of the French settled in the Mississippi Valley he wrote to Bishop Carroll: (10)

> My visit through the French settlements has been very laborious, but a hundred times more successful than I would have expected: I have confirmed about twelve hundred people, though I confirm only those who have made their first communion. At least eight or ten priests are wanting in this immense country and if some could be put among the Indians who would be willing to receive them, ten more would scarcely do.

The year following Bishop Flaget's visit the parish in St. Louis, lusty child of old Cahokia, became dependent on the services of Father Savine. Since the departure of Father Thomas Flynn in 1808 St. Louis had lacked a pastor, and had been obliged to depend on occasional visits of priests from the eastern shore of the Mississippi Now, in 1814, an agreement was arrived at between the Church-Wardens of St. Louis and Father Francis Louis Savine whereby the latter agreed to assume the duties of pastor to St. Louis while continuing his assignment in Cahokia. Father Savine agreed to come to St. Louis on the third Sunday of every month to care for the spiritual needs of the Faithful as well as agreeing to render aid to the sick and dying. The Church-Wardens on their part assumed the obligation of offering an annual honorarium to care for the expenses incurred by the priest's visits (11). This arrangement continued until 1817 when, after a lapse of ten years without a resident pastor, St. Louis again was blessed with the presence of a priest in the person of Father Felix De Andreis, C.M., who took up residence in St. Louis in the fall of 1817.

The arrival of Father De Andreis occasioned no little stir in Cahokia's old Parish. He was accompanied by Bishop Flaget and Father Joseph Rosati all of whom were on their way to St. Louis to prepare the place for the arrival of Bishop William Louis DuBourg who had been appointed, in 1815, Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas. On the way to their destination the little caravan stopped briefly in Cahokia to renew acquaintances and offer aid to the pastor (12). The following year when Bishop DuBourg arrived to be installed in his diocese, he stayed two days in Cahokia, January 3 to 5, 1818. When he was ready to depart forty men of the Parish, mounted on "supurb chargers marching two by two in perfect order, led the pageant to the bank of the Mississippi River" where the Bishop and his entourage embarked for St. Louis to be received by a large councourse of the Faithful come out to welcome their new Bishop (13).

It soon became evident to authorities both in America and Rome that the western portion of the state of Illinois was too far removed from the episcopal see of Bardstown to be properly administered by the bishop of that diocese. Hence, in 1824, when the vast Diocese of Louisiana had been more conveniently separated into the sees of New Orleans and St. Louis, the villages on the eastern bank of the Mississippi were withdrawn from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bardstown and linked to the authority of the Bishopric of St. Louis, on whose episcopal throne now sat Joseph Rosati as Coadjutor to Bishop DuBourg who was as yet episcopical head of the whole area (14). In the same year Bishop Rosati visited Cahokia on October 5. In his diary he noted: (15)

> Early in the morning, notwithstanding the driving rain we set out for Cahokia, where we arrived about 9 o'clock. I said Mass in the church giving Communion to 47 candidates for Confirmation. After Mass, preached to them and finally administered to them the sacrament of Confirmation.

Three years after Bishop Rosati's first visitation, two events of importance occurred to the Parish. The first, purely social in character, probably occasioned an unusual amount of activity. The Marquis de Lafayette was visiting the United States on a sort of grand tour receiving the plaudits of a thankful populace. Arriving in the vicinity of St. Louis, the renowned Revolutionary Aide to Washington and prominent figure in the early years of France's Revolution of 1789, seems to have elected to reside briefly at the famous Jarrot House in Cahokia. Unfortunately there appears to have been little recorded about the great social lion's visit save the fact of his presence. It is to be surmised, however, that at least some sort of public homage was offered by the Village.

Just at the time of Lafayette's visit Cahokia was deprived of the guidance of Father Savine who was dispatched southward to take up residence in St. Charles, Louisiana (16). Cahokia's spiritual needs has to be cared for during the coming three years by such chance visitors as could momentarily be freed. Two of these deserve at least passing mention. The third, Father Francis Regis Loisel was to become pastor of Cahokia. Father Joseph Anthony Lutz, a young German from Odenheim in the Duchy of Baden, who had come to America hoping to be sent among the aborigines of the west, cared briefly and zealously for Cahokia. His Superior wrote of him: (17)

> Mr. Lutz appears to be a zealous missionary. I sent him to Cahokia and to Vide Poche on account of the Jubilee. He is all afire to convert others. Now he has learned to mount a horse, but a short time ago he tumbled down, without however hurting himself. He is timid and does not speak French well. but the present practice will encourage him and be useful for his knowledge.

Father Lutz or Odenheim, as he was usually called, eventually did obtain his desire to work among the Indians of Western America with whom he proved himself indeed the zealous missionary his early efforts indicated. A second visitor to Cahokia between 1827 and 1830 was Father S. Dussaussoy who, after a brief stay in the St. Louis area, appears to have been sent by Bishop Rosati to Louisiana where he held several posts. Roger Baudier, author of **The Catholic Church in Louisiana** informs us that Father Dussaussoy was the nephew of Mother Barat, Foundress of the Religious of the Sacred Heart (18).

Finally, in 1830, it became possible to appoint a pastor to the Parish who was able to remain in that office for the coming six years. Father Peter J. Doutreluingue of the Congregation of the

Missions, who though occupied with duties in the Seminary of St. Mary's of the Barrens, near the present Perryville, Missouri, had been frequently called upon to to supply in the absence of priests at the parishes within reasonable distance of the school. Evidently very zealous, the new Pastor set about canvassing his people to determine the number of Catholics under his charge and their religious needs. By 1832 a parish census had been taken which indicates a total membership of one hundred and fifty souls (19). Not satisfied with knowing the needs of the immediate inhabitants of Cahokia, Father Doutreluingue scoured the countryside, establishing little mission stations at French Village, St. Thomas and Belleville (20).

Apparently the six years of Father Doutreluingue's service to Cahokia's Parish were not completely idyllic in every respect. A question appears to have arisen concerning the jurisdiction of the Church-Wardens whose authority was so carefully deliniated in 1799. We have no record of the origin of the difference of opinion between the Pastor and these officials. But there remains a quite pointedly worded document from Bishop Rosati sent to the Pastor in March of 1835 from which we gather that a dispute of some more than passing import had continued for a time and needed clear settlement. Hence the Bishop instructed Father Doutreluingue to announce to his congregation that: (21)

> . . . this assembly held in the Church under your direction is the only one which I shall recognize as legitimate, to the exclusion of all other which shall otherwise be held, which ought to be considered as clandestine assemblies. If they promise to observe the regulations made which experience has made plain are so useful for the welfare of the parish you will continue peaceably your functions without giving attention to the small number who may do or say otherwise. If . . . . . they refuse to follow our advice and our instructions you will give me a written account thereof and I will communicate the arrangements which you will have to make to the end that you may go to carry the blessings, the consolations and the advantages of the pastoral ministry to others who will know how to appreciate them better.

Having fulfilled the instructions of the Bishop, the Pastor could report on the same day which the letter from the episcopical authority was read: (22).

> . . . there was held a general assembly of the inhabitants immediately after the parochial High Mass in the Church the twenty second of March, 1835, in which it was decided by general consent that hereinafter there would no longer be church-wardens and that those who had been church-wardens should absolutely put aside from their responsibility and that the pastor alone under the authority of the Bishop will administer the rights of the Church as also to cause to be observed regulations made for the revenues of the Church.

The document is signed by the Pastor, and a great number of his parishioners. Whatever may have been the occasion for the controversy, the members of the parish who had been in discord appeared willing to elect to submit to direction on those matters pertaining to the pastors office, a difficult matter when feelings run high and public expression of opinion has once been allowed to sway the populace.

A kind of blessing in disguise happened during Midnight Mass the Christmas of 1835. While the congregation was assembled to celebrate the annual observance of the Nativity of our Lord fire consumed the residence of the Pastor which the people of the Parish had build nearly fifty years before, the very existence of which had been offered by them as a proof of their anxiety to have among them a priest in residence (23). It may not be inaccurate to conclude that the flames which consumed the home of their Pastor also wiped out of the hearts of a disgruntled minority any hostility to the direct manner in which shortly before those few had been required to choose between following the lead of the priest in charge of the Parish or being held to be in revolt.

Perhaps the most important new development in the life of the Parish came to pass in 1836 when there arrived a group of religious women of the Congregation of St. Joseph who had come to establish a school for the Parish and the neighborhood. Two years before Bishop Rosati had asked friends in France to try to obtain for him a community of nuns to strengthen the educational opportunities of the diocese. Through the instrumentation of Father Charles Cholleton, whom the Bishop had appointed as European representative for the Diocese. Mother St. John Fontbonne was induced to assign six of her Sisters of St. Joseph to come to the St. Louis area and found a center for the instruction of youth, especially those who were deaf-mutes (24). We have no explanation of why Cahokia should have been particularly favored at the location for the community. Perhaps it was because the Pastor, Father Doutreluingue, was able to procure for them a house and four acres of ground near the Church in Cahokia, "at the cost of much personal sacrifice" (25). When the little group of six religious women arrived in St. Louis, three of the number were dispatched to Cahokia to begin the work of establishing a school for the instruction of the children of the neighborhood. The institution was an immediate, but not lasting success. In the first year of its existence the "Abbey" as it came to be called, had an enrollment of thirty-nine pupils.

In the midst of the opening of the new venture Father Doutreluingue was replaced in office by Father Matthew Condamine, a young priest from the city of Lyons in France, whence he had come to the United States in 1831. Cahokia was to have him but two short months when death took him during what appears to be a local epidemic of fever. This loss was indeed a blow to Cahokia and to the Diocese for the scarcity of priests rendered a replacement quite difficult. Father Condamine died on August 8, 1836 and was buried in the old cemetery adjoining the Church. We are told that the nuns deeply regretted that the same illness from which their Pastor died made them so ill that they could not attend the obsequies to pay honor to the dead priest. Cahokia was again without a Pastor and was to remain so bereft until the next year when Father John Francis Regis Loisel was appointed to take charge of the Parish.

John Francis Regis Loisel, Pastor of Holy Family Parish in Cahokia from 1836 until 1845, was the first native-born citizen of St. Louis to be raised to the honor of the priesthood. Born in St. Louis March 24, 1805, the posthumus son of a prominent merchant whose family had come from Canada, the child was enrolled at the age of 13 as one of the first students of St. Louis University which opened its doors in 1818. At the age of fifteen young Regis entered St. Mary's Seminary at the Barrens to begin his ecclesiastical studies. Seven years later, in 1827, though his health was very poor, he was ordained in the St. Louis Cathedral on the Feast of St. Peter and Paul which is celebrated on June 29. Assigned to assist at the Cathedral, Father Loisel spent the next nine years of his life as one of the curates there, often finding it necessary to relenquish his duties in order to retire to his mother's home for the care of his health. When Father Matthew Condamine died suddenly in August, 1836, Bishop Rosati appointed Father Loisel to the office of Pastor of Cahokia (26).

As is often the case with the chronically ill, Father Loisel accomplished much in spite of his poor health. He immediately began to carry out the plans set on foot by Father Doutreluingue for erecting chapels in the villages adjacent to Cahokia. The first of these small houses of worship was begun at St. Thomas, known as Johnston's Settlement. There Father Loisel called the Catholics together and induced them to cut the lumber and contribute their time to building their chapel which appears to have been completed in 1836. A second such station was projected for the many German Catholic immigrants who had begun to settle in St. Clair County about the present city of Belleville. Father Loisel asked the Bishop to give them a priest who could speak German, but because the Bishop had heard Cahokia's Pastor preach in German the request was not granted. Besides, there resided near Belleville a Father Charles Meyer, a priest retired from the European diocese of Basel who was able to care for the needs of the Germans. A little chapel had been erected by Father Meyer's relatives where the Catholics could attend.

During 1837 and 1838 Cahokia's Common saw the busy activity of builders. When fire again burned the rectory, a new and pretentious structure was constructed at the Pastor's own expense. This was no rude log dwelling, but a handsome colonial structure of brick with imposing columns supporting the roof of its porch. The durable character of the house may be gathered from the fact that it survived over a century. Together with the building of the fine, new rectory, generous friends made it possible for the Sisters of St. Joseph to build a new chapel to add to their little foundation. Hence by 1838 the village of Cahokia could boast a goodly collection of ecclesiastical structures.

Perhaps the interest evinced by the parishioners in the unprecedented building activity led them to be distracted from their religious observances on Sunday. We find that in March of 1837 the Parish, assembled to settle certain affairs of the Parish. It was agreed to appoint five representatives of the congregation to act in concert with the Pastor in all matters of importance. Once elected, the first act of the Committee appears to have been to issue a declaration that the people of the Parish should not loiter about the doors of the Church during the Parish Mass, but should be directed to "put an end to a disorder so annoying to the piety of the faithful assembled in the Church" (27). Two officers were appointed to see to the fulfillment of this duty. They were instrucced to admonish delinquents kindly. Should any fail to observe the admonition the recalcitrants were to be submitted to "the rigor of the law (28).

What the Parish Committee may have thought of the necessity of a new Cemetery for the Parish is nowhere recorded. By 1839 the need for solving the problem arose, probably for the most obvious reasons that the ancient plot which had served as a resting place for Cahokia's departed had no further space. It is unfortunate that there are no details of discussion preceding the decision. Certainly it can be assumed that the congregation, especially the older members, had strong opinions about the decision so close to the hearts of everyone. The old Cemetery of Cahokia's Parish is believed to be the most ancient such resting place for the dead in the Mississippi Valley. Hard by the Church rest the remains of the French pioneers who, with their spiritual shepherds, built the gateway to the West. The decision to open the new plot a mile to the west of the Church was reached and put into effect in 1839 with the burial of Julia Touchette, the wife of Pierre Voudris (29). Today there remains little indication of the presence of the old Cemetery about the Church. Only six grave-stones are left to indicate the approximate location of the last resting places of Father Bergier, William Clark and the many French and Indians who were buried there.

While Father Loisel and his flock went about the affairs in their small village, new changes in ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the West were being arranged. When the Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore was in session the assembled bishops recommended to the Holy See the establishment of several new dioceses for the Catholics of America. Among those suggested was Chicago, which was to have for its territory the whole of the State of Illinois. Approbation for the new diocese was granted in 1843 when the Reverend William J. Quarter of New York was designated as the first Bishop for the Diocese of Chicago (30). Though Cahokia was included in the newly established Diocese, no very drastic change in the religious life of the Parish was brought about. The Pastor continued to look upon St. Louis and Bishop Rosati as his immediate superior for by almost unuversal arrangement it was customary for bishops to designate episcopal neighbors as vicars-general for distant parishes which could more effectively be administered by a neighbor.

Though historically the erection of a new diocese which included Cahokia may seem a matter of some moment to the Parish, really the people were much too overcome by a natural catastrophe which came to pass on the heels of the announcement of the Bishop of Chicago to give that event any attention. Just a few months after the ecclesiastical announcement, in September of 1843 Cahokia was inundated by a disasterous flood which all but destroyed the Village. A severe winter followed by a late spring which melted the heavy snows in the Rocky Mountains caused both the Mississippi and the Missouri to flood the aluvial bottom lands of Cahokia. When the flood waters reached Cahokia in late May the town was inundated and the inhabitants were slowly forced into the taller buildings and onto roof tops whence they were rescued by boats which came from St. Louis. The St. Joseph Sisters sought safety in the Parish rectory as did many others. Father Loisel did not spare himself during the catastrophe, but went about calmly encouraging his people and caring for their welfare. Father Loisel's own account of the flood, says in part: (31)

> Monday, May 20, the water swollen by almost continual rains during eight days, breached at length the dyke and spread by degrees into the village and surroundings. It continued to increase until the following Wednesday.. That day, May 22, towards noon the water began to fall and Saturday, 25th, one went several places by dry foot. One could scarcely mark the height of the water since there was no fixed point which might serve as a rule. It suffices to say that the water entered into the greater part of the houses and covered in cerain places the floor from three to four feet. Some old people say that it was found at the same height as in 1826. In the Church yard the water reached to thirty or forty feet from the door of the Church.
>
> R. Loisel, Pastor.
> Cahokia 26 May
> Pentecost Day, 1844.

Soon after the Village had returned to some semblance of normal life after the destructive waters had subsided, Father Loisel was taken ill probably because of exposure. Laid low by an epiedmic of fever which struck the Parish, undoubtedly as as consequence of poor sanitary conditions after the inundation, the Pastor was obliged to relinquish his charge and return to St. Louis where he lingered on until May 10, 1845 when he died at the home of one of his sisters (32). The profound respect which Fathed Loisel enjoyed from his contemporaries is evident in the many obituaries published at his demise. The Belleville **Advocate** said in part (33):

> Father Loisel was one of those men that society is seldom, very seldom, blest with, and the loss of whom it is its duty to mourn, as the loss of an ornament of the most precious order, and, of consequence, as scarce as it is precious. There was united in him almost all the virtues that man, in his present depraved state, can be expected to possess. In him were centered almost all the great and desirable qualities that can make a

man really useful on this earth, and that are calculated to attract the love of everyone who desires the well being of his fellows.

Though the author of the article may have been carried away by the occasion of the death of a priest in his prime, a native of the area, and member of a prominent St. Louis family, Father Loisel's character still emerges as sincerely noteworthy.

With the death of Father Loisel Cahokia passed into a kind of eclipse for a few years. The spiritual needs of the Parish were cared for between 1847 and 1849 by infrequent visits of various priests in the neighborhood. The rectory which had been built at Father Loisel's expense reverted to his family who sold it to the Village to be used as a school (34). The Sisters of St. Joseph did not return to reopen "The Abbey", seemingly because the civil authorities of the Village informed them that plans were laid to open a school supported by the funds derived from the Cahokia Common (35). After three years of experience with the difficulties of directing education, the Board of Trustees of the Common found that they would do well to petition the nuns to return and relieve them of their complications. Wih customary kindness the Sisters of St. Joseph graciously crossed the River and took up residence in their former quarters which must have been in none too good repair after a flood and three years of both misuse and disuse (36). Eight years after their return the Sister of St. Joseph finally and permanently gave up their work in Cahokia. To the detriment of the Parish, it was thirty-three years before it could again boast of a school for its children under the care of a religious community.

To solve the problem of a resident pastor for Cahokia, Bishop Quarter of Chicago approached the Jesuits in St. Louis and asked them to assume responsibility for the Parish. Father Martin Van de Velde, S.J., major superior of the Jesuits in Missouri consented in 1847 to allow Father Ignatius Maes, S.J., to accept the responsibilty for Cahokia provided that in case of the illness or death of the appointee the Jesuits would not be obliged to continue to furnish priests for the parish (37). However, Father Van de Velde was anxious to care for Cahokia for he promptly wrote to Father John Roothan, General of the Jesuits, requesting permission to acceed to Bishop Quarter's request that the Jesuits permanently care for Cahokia (38). A year after appointing Father Maes to the office of Pastor in Cahokia, Father Martin Van de Velde received instructions from the Holy See to accept the position of Bishop of Chicago which See was made vacant by the death of Bishop Quarter on April 9, 1848. Now Van de Velde became an earnest crusader with the major superiors of the Jesuits for the case of Cahokia.

Father John A. Elet, successor to the office vacated by the newly consecrated Bishop Van de Velde, did not share his predecessor's enthusiasm regarding Cahokia. Being obliged to recall Father Maes for work among the Indians in Minnesota, Father Elet sent Father John Shulz, S.J., as a replacement and Father James James Bussochets, S.J., to Belleville. When the Jesuit General gave the requisite permission for assuming responsibility for Cahokia there was attached a contingency that the pastoral duties of this new scene of labors for the Jesuits should be taken over if there were sufficient priests to continue all the other obligations already being carried. In 1852 Father Elet and his advisors agreed that the scarcity of priests to care for the heavy burdens already assumed made it imperative to inform the Bishop of Chicago that they could no longer care for Cahokia. Just at the moment the Jesuits had lost several of their members by untimely deaths. In his disappointment at the turn of events Bishop Van de Velde told his brethern "that heaven, in taking so many men away from them wished to punish them for withdrawing from Cahokia and other parishes in Illinois the priest he had placed there." (39). Perhaps the saintly old Bishop has forgiven his brethern now, especially Father Elet. Both are buried close to one another in the cemetery of the Jesuit Seminary at Florissant, Missouri.

For three decades after 1852 it becomes almost impossible to obtain any detailed knowledge of the history of Cahokia's Parish. There remains to us only the barest records of Baptisms, Confirmations, marriage and burials of the faithful from which we are able to learn the names of the many priests who cared for the Parish. We know very little even about the priests who were at Cahokia, in some cases not even their exact names. Between 1852 and 1857 Fathers J. Maistre and the Cure Huicq served briefly to be followed by Father A. J. Harris A. Vignone and J. Stehle whose successor bore the Gallicized Irish name of Timothy Carie. In December of 1857 Father Doutreluingue, C.M., was sent back to his former flock where he was to remain until 1871. Father Doutreluingue's return to Cahokia coincides with the erection of a new diocesan division of the former Diocese of Chicago. Unprecedented immigration of German and Swiss Catholics, who were attracted both by the agricultural opportunities and the extensive railroad construction in progress, had increased the needs of Catholics for spiritual assistance in western Illinois far beyond the ability of one bishop to care for properly. At the suggestion of the assembled Bishops of America the Holy See established the Diocese of Quincy in 1853 and within four years moved the seat of epicopacy to Alton where Henry Damian Juncher was enthroned as the first incumbent. Cahokia's Parish again found itself part of a change of ecclesiastical jurisdiction when it was announced tht St. Clair County was included within the confines of the new Diocese.

Upon the retirement of Father Doutreluingue in 1871 the people of Cahokia, though never without a priest to care for them, were not to have the benefit of a resident shepherd who remained with them for any long period of years until 1882. Father H. Landry was stationed among them from 1871 until September of 1875 when he was succeeded by Father J. A. Jacques. After three years in Cahokia Father Jacques died and was buried in the Old Cemetery within the shadow of the Church. Father Franz Joseph Kempen, Cahokia's next Pastor came to his parish within two years of his ordination. Born in the German Rhineland in 1847, he saw military service in the Prussian Army in the Franco-Prussian War. After his discharge the soldier entered ecclesiastical studies, being ordained in 1876. Perhaps Father Kempen was attracted to the Diocese of Alton because Bishop Juncker had frequently sought such volunteers in the seminaries of Germany (40). No evidence is at hand to indicate conclusively that Bishop Juncker's successor, Peter Joseph Baltes, continued the practice, but it might be fairly concluded that the new Bishop welcomed new-comers who might volunteer because of interest aroused by his predecessor. In 1882 ill health caused Father Kempen to retire. Most of the rest of his long life was spent unsuccessfully attempting to regain sufficient strength to carry on his apostolic career. He died at the age of seventy-one (41).

The conclusion of the four years of Father Kempen's service as Pastor of Cahokia may be taken to close an era. The Church in America during the last quarter of the Ninteenth Century was passing out of the mission age of her existence. The number of the clergy was both more numerous and more liberally salted with native Americans. Communications had improved; new economic outlets were available. The West had long ceased to mean the Mississippi Valley to Americans. In turn the village of Cahokia, never a community of vast population or economic importance, was beginning to become a relic of the past. People were beginning to write about the Village and its history because it was so old. These are signs that America was growing up and beginning to cherish her past. Though observers may have considered Cahokia and the Parish a relic of the past, worth preserving as a proof of the antiquity of the Mississippi Valley, the congregation at Cahokia and the Pastors saw for her a new and more vigorous future.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

1. Belleville **Advocate,** November 7, 1844.
2. J. G. Shea, **The Catholic Church in the United States,** II, p.484.
3. M. C. Norton, "Cahokia Marriage Records" **Illinois Libraries,** XXVIII(1946), p.260--272; "Marriage Records of St. Clair County, 1791-1807," **Illinois Libraries** XXVIII(1946), p.321-334; "St. Clair County Marriage Records," **Illinois Libraries** XXVIII (1946), p.436-442.
4. Jean Baptiste Olivier, a native of Nantes in France came to America in approximately 1794 at the invitation of Bishop Carroll. With his brother, Donatien, also a priest, he was sent to the Mississippi Valley in 1799. Jean Baptists acted as pastor of Cahokia until 1803 when he was sent to New Orleans to assure the post of chaplain to the Usruline nuns and Vicar General for Bishop Carroll. (cf. Shea,II,595). Donatien, though officially pastor of Prairie du Rocher, was for many years the only resident priest in western Illinois. He died January 29, 1841 at the age of ninty-five. (cf. Rothensteiner, **History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis,** I, p.194.).
5. Rothensteiner, **op.cit.,** I, p.193.
6. G. J. Garraghan, S. J. in his **Chapters in Frontier History,** (Milwaukee, 1934), p.94-135 offers the best summary of the Trappist story.
7. Shea, **op.cit.** III, p.271.
8. Belleville **Weekly,** January 8, 1847.
9. Shea, **op.cit.,** III, p.278.
10. Shea, **op.cit.,** III, p.279.
11. Rothensteiner, **op.cit.,** I, p.217.
12. Rothensteiner, **op.cit.,** I, p.258.
13. Rothensteiner, **op.cit.,** I, p.265-66.
14. J. Rothensteiner, "The Northeastern Part of the Diocese of St. Louis Under Bishop Rosati," **Illinois Catholic Historical Review,** II (1919), p.177.
15. C. L. Souvay, C. M. "The Lazarists in Illinois," **Illinois Catholic Historical Review** I (1918), p.308.
16. Shea, **op.cit.,** III, p.390. Father Savine was sent South for his health.
17. Rothensteiner, **op.cit.,** I, p.453 Saulnier to Rosati.
18. R. Baudier, **The Catholic Church in Louisiana** (New Orleans, 1939), p.293.
19. Cahokia Parish Archives.
20. **Ibid.**
21. **Ibid.**
22. **Ibid.**
23. F. Beuchman, **History of the Diocese of Belleville** (Belleville, 1919), p.21.
24. Sister Mary Lucida Savage, **The Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet** (St. Louis, 1923), p.31.
25. Savage, **op.cit.,** p. 39.
26. F. G. Holweck, "Reverend John Francis Loisel," **St. Louis Catholic Historical Review,** I (L918-19), p.103-109.

27. Cahokia Parish Archives. The Committee apparently did not function well for the system was abandoned in 1844.
28. **Ibid.**
29. Beuchman, **op.cit.,** p.21.
30. G. J. Garraghan, S.J. **The Catholic Church in Chicago, 1763-1871,** (Chicago, 1921), p.108.
31. Cahokia Parish Archives. A "Sexton for Flood Time" was appointed March 24, 1844.
32. Holweck, **loc.cit.,** The exact date of Father Loisel's death is disputed. May 10 is given by Holweck, but the Belleville **Advocate** reporting on May 8 says that the priest was "interred yesterday." The **Missouri Republic** reports the funeral on May 7.
33. Belleville **Advocate**, May 8, 1844.
34. **Beuchman, op.cit.,** p. 21.
35. F. Beuchman, "The French Commons of Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Prairie du Rocher," **Illinois Catholic Historical Review,** I (1919), p.405-412.
36. Savage, **op.cit.,** p.99, says that the Sisters left Cahokia in 1856. Beuchman, **op.cit.,** 22, gives the date as 1860 and the reason, a dispute with the Trustees of the Cahokia Common.
37. G. J. Garrahghan, S. J. **The Jesuits of the Middle United States,** (New York 1938), II, p.41.
38. **Ibid.**
39. Garrahghan, **op.cit.,** II, p.42.
40. J. J. Thompson, **Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, Diamond Jubilee History** (Springfield, 1927), p.276.
41. **The Messenger, Official Publication of the Belleville Diocese,** XXXI (1939) No. 23, p.85.

THE PARISH AT CAHOKIA, 1883-1949

At the opening of its contemporary history, the Parish of Cahokia seemed destined to sink into oblivion. In 1883 there was very little by way of economic attraction to hold the congregation to the Village. The bustling railroad center of East St. Louis attracted the young men of the neighborhood to new wage opportunities. Across the river to the west, St. Louis was a great metropolis, quickly becoming a manufacturing center. At home in Cahokia the villagers saw before them only agricultural possibilities which were not as attractive as were the more lucrative and steady occasions for employment to be had away from home. Even the Village itself was unattractive. Few of its houses showed signs of reasonable prosperity. The ancient Church was slowly decaying. The rectory, on a little rise near the Church was beginning to age. There was no parish school where one's children could be properly educated. Before such a bleak outlook it would not be surprising if the Bishop of the Diocese had not decided that Cahokia's Parish had outlived its usefulness and no longer merited the presence of one of his priests. Fortunately for Cahokia and the history of its past, no such decision was made. Rather, Cahokia was given as a new Pastor Father John Ferdinand Meifuss, fresh from his ecclesiastical studies, to revivify the Parish.

Father Meifuss was born in Wiedenbruech, Germany, October 1, 1860. After finishing his studies at the University of Louvain he was ordained May 19, 1883 and almost immediately left for America where the Bishop of the Alton Diocese sent him to Cahokia to take over the Parish and instill new life into it. It took six years of effort before any external evidence of the new vitality began to appear. Then, as though by internal combustion a whole series of events, one immediately following another, demonstrated the new day for the Parish in Cahokia.

For the future life of the Parish the most important event in 1889 was the reopening of a parish school conducted by the nuns of the Congregation of the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood whose Motherhouse is in Ruma, Illinois. The arrival of the nuns to open the school must have been an occasion for great rejoicing in the Parish since the presence of religious women had not been felt for the past thirty-three years. Taking up residence in the rectory built by Father Loisel, the nuns, of whom only two were assigned to the new "mission," lived and conducted their school in quarters hardly adequate for a normal family home. In the September of 1949 at the reopening of a new session, the nuns of this same Congregation will begin their fifty-ninth consecutive year of teaching the children of Cahokia's Parish.

Concurrently with the opening of the school, the Parish under the guidance of the Pastor, began to erect a new Church to supplant the log structure which was then within a decade of having stood for a full century. The new gothic structure of stone was dedicated on July 30, 1891 by Father Bernard Clause, Vicar General of the new Diocese of Belleville. This compact little church, standing perhaps fifty yards to the west of the hoary old mother-church, seems somewhat prim and precise. Its lovely gothic facade promises more than it fulfills. But it is a beautiful little church, neat and clean with soft wooden altars and colored windows high in its walls bearing family names of donors whose roots are deep in the rich soil of the Village.

The year during which the Parish began building the new church saw the establishment of the new Diocese of Belleville, the latest and probably final modification of major ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the old Parish of Cahokia. The new Diocese, established in 1889, was given for its first Bishop Joannes Janssen who had been induced to come to America by Bishop Juncker on his very earliest recruiting tour to the German seminaries in 1857. Instead of the life of a missionary which he probably expected, the young priest, after his ordination in Alton in 1858, spent most of his thirty-one years previous to being raised to the episcopal dignity, assisting in administration of the diocesean affairs at Alton. On the death of Bishop Baltes, Father Janssen was appointed administrator of the diocese until a successor to the dead prelate was chosen. During the vacancy of the See of Alton it was considered wise to reduce the vast size of the diocese and establish a new jurisdiction within its old confines. Belleville was selected as the seat of the new diocese and Father Janssen was appointed its first Bishop.

Perhaps the new Bishop considered that the Parish at Cahokia could afford to surrender its energetic Pastor once the new church was completed for in 1891 Father Meifuss was sent to Breese, Illinois, where he was placed in charge of St. Dominic's parish. He was to care for that congregation for thirty-five years until his death March 6, 1926. Cahokia received Father N. Dietrich who remained four years and was succeeded by Father F. W. Ferland who also remained at the Parish for a period of four years. In quick succession he was followed by Father A. Vollebregt, who was at the Parish from March of 1898 to September of 1899, and Father F. Mumbour who was Pastor of the Parish from 1899 to 1902.

When Father Mumbour retired from the Parish in 1902 the new appointee was a young man just thirty-three years old, a native of Darfeld, Germany who had been in America eight years. Father Franz Berkenbrock had come to East St. Louis almost immediately after his ordination in 1894. Assigned to St. Henry's parish he labored there until 1902 when appointed to Cahokia. Scarcely had he arrived when the spring flood of 1903 played havoc with his charge. After the waters subsided it became imperative to solve the problem of both parish school and rectory. The solution was found by building the present rectory and securing the use of the Jarrot mansion for both convent and school. Of the next nine years of the life of the Parish we know nothing eventful. Day by day the Pastor cared for his people, and the children were instructed in their school where once the great had been entertained. In 1912 Father Berkenbrock was given a change of parishes. He was appointed pastor of St. Liborious Church in the village of St. Libory, remaining until ill health required his retirement. He returned to his native Darfeld and died there in 1935, four years after leaving his congregation in America.

The Parish's new Pastor, Father Robert Hynes who arrived in 1912, saw in his charge both a lviing parish and a national monument which should be preserved. Delving into the history of the Parish and appreciating its antiquity he set about at once to launch a crusade to save the ancient Church from destruction. So vigorous and successful was the campaign launched on a national scale that within a year the new Pastor had sufficient funds to carry out at least essential repairs to he original century old Church which he hoped to convert into a national shrine where Americans might recall the antiquity of the Mississippi Valley. Though the dream remained unrealized during his stay at Cahokia, his writings and his campaign helped to make known the historical importance of the Parish. With funds he collected Father Hynes saved the old Church, though he was unable to completely restore it. On the occasion of the ceremonies held to celebrate the restoration Father Hynes issued a pamphlet in which he told the story of the Parish from its beginning. This brief account, which was later reprinted by Father Frederic Beuckman in his **History of the Diocese of Belleville,** constitutes the first effort to offer a history of the Parish. Father Hynes was relieved of his duties at Cahokia in 1914. Such was his interest in the Parish that when he died in 1945 he left instructions for his burial beside the old Church for which he had done so much.

During the coming seven years, from 1914 to 1921 Father John F. Wiemar cared for Cahokia's Parish. Besides serving his own flock, the Pastor met the needs of the new village of Dupo for a church and regular attention to the religious life of that community. These were the years during which the commercial chemical companies were invading the neighborhood of Cahokia, changing it from a quiet agricultural countryside to an area of gigantic plants for the production of chemicals, industrial electricity, and the like. By 1921, when Father J. P. Oberlinkels replaced Father Wiemer, Cahokia's population had increased to a noticeable extent. The life of the Parish continued undisturbed but the Village was changing and its religious needs were increasing.

On October 10, 1928 the Reverend Joseph Henry Mueller was appointed to take charge of the Parish of the Holy Family in Cahokia. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, December 20, 1895, he was given his primary education in the parochial schools of the city. At the age of thirteen he enrolled in the Pontifical College of the Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio to prepare for the priesthood. Ordained on May 21, 1921 he joined the Diocese of Belleville and began his priestly work there at St. Patrick's Parish in East St. Louis, Illinois three days less than a month after his ordination. After two years in East St. Louis Father Mueller was sent to help the pastor of St. Andrew's in Murphysboro, Illinois where he remained from June 10, 1923 until January 9, 1924 whence he moved to Breese, Illinois, to assist Father Meifuss, formerly of Cahokia. On April 1, 1925 Father Mueller was appointed to become pastor of

St. Catherine's in the town of Grand Chain, Illinois from which office he moved on July 7, 1926 to Renault. Within less than two years Father Mueller was sent to Cahokia.

For eight years the economic depression felt throughout the nation was particularly confining for Cahokia and its Parish whose people depended for their livelihood either on farming or employment in nearby plants which were by no means producing at their greatest possible level. Despite straitened circumstances, Father Mueller strove mightily to supply the physical needs of his parish as well as its spiritual life. By 1936 it became possible to renovate the church ereceted by Father Meifuss in 1903. Seven years later the Pastor laid plans for a new school. On October 22, 1944 the cornerstone was laid and on Labor Day, September 3, 1945 the building was occupied. This little gem of Georgian Colonial architecture houses a most carefully planned and beautifully efficient set of school rooms, comfortable assesmbly quarters and a spacious hall which surprises and delights the visitor.

For the twenty years of Father Mueller's pastoral office in Cahokia it has been his hope as well as the hope of many others that somehow the ancient Church might be rescued from destruction. As the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Parish approached, several historical societies in Missouri and Illinois expressed interest in celebrating the occasion with fitting dignity. Mrs. William H. Matlack, President of the Cahokia Historical Society, quite generously took the initiative and invited all interested parties to a meeting in East St. Louis, Illinois on April 12, 1948 at which she proposed the formation of an Association to further the celebration of the coming of Cahokia's founding. Her suggestion was received with more than usual enthusiasm. After several subsequent gatherings for preliminary discussion, the Cahokia Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration Association was formed and incorporated in the State of Illinois, its purpose being the restoration of the Church in Cahokia, the fitting celebration of the anniversary and the continuance of an organization to maintain Cahokia as an important national shrine of our history. When the Association came into existence on October 15, 1948 its President, Mrs. Matlack, was able to announce that the Diocese of Belleville had donated substantially to furthering the work of restoring the one hundred and fifty year old Church at Cahokia. That work of restoration was immediately begun in order that the building might be ready for the celebration in May, 1949.

The old Parish of Cahokia has come full cycle in her history. From a mere hut with a cross beside it in a virgin wilderness it has grown through two hundred and fifty years to an important institution in the history of the Mississippi Valley. On the score of antiquity it is our oldest permanent settlement in the heart of the United States. But age alone is at best a tenuous claim to attention. Cahokia's importance is based on stronger foundations than the bare fact of its two hundred and fifty years of life. The Village and the Parish are important because of what was accomplished there for God and His creatures. We recount the history of the Parish chiefly in its highlights, rather than in its true character and real greatness. It is not the great events which are important in the life of the Parish. But rather the hidden stretches of monotonous, daily care for the souls of men. The example of the lives of the Pastors, the sterling virtues instilled into the people, the daily education of the children, the consolation of the Sacraments; all of these are the true history of the Parish. For these were the real events, the deep influence of Christianity whereby the Parish made of the wilderness a shrine of greatness.

PASTORS OF THE HOLY FAMILY PARISH OF CAHOKIA

Jean Francois Buisson de St. Cosme	1699-1700
Jean (Marc) Bergier	1700-1708
Dominique Marie Varlet	1712-1718
Jean Mercier	1718-1754
Francois Forget du Verger	1754-1763
Sebastian Louis Meurin, S. J.	1764-1777
Bernard de Limpach, O. F. M. Cap.	1779-1786
Paul de St. Pierre, Carmelite	1786-1789
Jacques le Dru, O. P.	1789
Pierre Gibault	1789-1791
Michael Lavadoux, Sulpician	1792-1796
Charles Leander Lusson, Recollet	1797-1798
Jean Baptiste Olivier	1799-1803
Francis Louis Savine	1811-1826
Joseph Anthony Lutz von Odenheim	1827-1830
Peter J. Doutreluingue, C. M.	1830-1836
John Francis Regis Loisel	1836-1845
Ignatius Maes, S. J.	1847-1849
John Schultz, S. J.	1849-1852
J. Maistre	1852-1853
Huicq, Cure	1853-1854
A. J. Farris	1855
A. Vignone	1855-1856
J. Stehle	1857
Timothee Carie	1857
Peter J. Doutreluingue, C. M.	1857-1871
H. Landry	1871-1874
J. A. Jacque	1875-1878
Franz Josef Kempen	1878-1882
John Ferdinand Meifuss	1822-1891
Nicholas Dietrich	1891-1894
L. W. Ferland	1894-1898
A. Vollebregt	1898-1899
F. Mumbour	1899-1903
Franz Berkenbrock	1903-1912
Robert Hynes	1912-1914
John F. Wiemar	1914-1921
J. Peter Oberlinkels	1921-1928
Joseph Henry Mueller	1928-

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